

WORK AND WIN

AN INTERESTING WEEKLY FOR YOUNG AMERICA.

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No. 43.

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 29, 1899.

Price 5 Cents.

FRED FEARNOT'S RANCHE; OR ROUGHING IT IN COLORADO.



Unable longer to stand their insolence, Fred and Terry mounted their horses, charged through the open gate at full speed, firing at the villains with their Winchesters, and in a few brief moments three of them were down.

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FRED FEARNOT'S RANCHE;

OR,

Roughing It In Colorado.

BY HAL STANDISH.

CHAPTER I.

FRED AND TERRY ONCE MORE VISIT THE TAYLOR RANCHE.

All of Fred Fearnot's friends will doubtless remember Nick Taylor, upon whose ranche, in the far West, Fearnot and his ehum, Terry Olcott, had spent the season. He had been wonderfully successful in raising eattle and fighting Indians and eattle thieves, and had purchased another ranche, in Colorado, which he plaeed in charge of a ranehman in whom he had implicit eonfidence. The man proved to be honest and industrious; but through laek of judgment and exeecutive ability, it had proved unprofitable. He was puzzled to know what to do with it, as the ranche lay twenty miles away from his other one, hence he could not attend to it himself. He bought it cheap, partly for debt, and was willing to sell it for what it eost him. It was well stocked, well watered, with good, strong, ample buildings upon it.

One day a ranehman in his employ showed him a paper containing an account of Fred Fearnot and Terry Olcott being in the town of Ozark, Nebraska. As soon as he read it he mounted his horse, rode forty miles to the nearest railroad station and took the train to go in quest of his two friends. He found Fred and Terry just winding up some business that had brought them out West and insisted that

they should go to his ranche with him. Of course the two were very glad to do so, for they had never forgotten their last experience on the Taylor Ranche and the many friends they had made among the eow punchers.

When they reached the railroad station, where Taylor had left his horse, they found two other teams there waiting for them. The same old station agent was there, who greeted Fred and Terry in his hearty, breezy Western way.

"Now, look here, Nick," said Terry, "when I came out here before you gave me a bueking broneho to ride, and before I reached your ranche every joint in my body, between my toes and fingers, had been strained almost to the snapping point. Now, I want to know if this animal is a bueker."

"I never heard of his bueking," said Nick; "but that is something we are never certain of in the breed of horses we have out here. If he does, you'll have to cure him, just as you did the other one."

"Well, that's a bit of exereise that I don't relish. I believe I'd rather walk."

"Why, what's the matter with you, Terry?" laughed Fred. "You seem to be losing your grit; for you conquered that broncho who tossed you over his head a year and a half ago, and now you are showing the white feather in the presence of the mildest looking horse I ever saw."

"Well, I fought it out that time, because he sprang the game on me without my knowing it, until he sent me flying over his head, but to get on another one would simply be inviting trouble, which I'm not disposed to do."

"Well, I'll swap horses with you," suggested Fred.

"What good will that do? I guess they are two of a kind, but just to see what luck has in store for me, I'll swap with you," and the two exchanged horses and soon started on their way toward the Taylor Ranche.

As they rode leisurely along they told Taylor many stories of their adventures in London, Paris and in Cuba since they had seen him last. Nick was deeply interested.

"After all," said he, "I don't think that either of you had such a hot time as you had out here on the day of that running fight with the Apaches."

"No, I don't think we did," assented Fred. "That was about the closest call, I think, we ever had. Have you had any trouble with them since?"

"Yes, once; but it was just a little scrimmage with a band of five, who had imbibed too much fire water."

"How did it end?"

"One was killed and three badly hurt," replied Nick, "while two of my boys were wounded. The rascally fellows are hard fighters when they get drunk, and seem to be utterly incapable of knowing what fear is."

"They are a pretty tough lot," remarked Terry.

"Yes, and there are a good many white men out in this part of the world who are just as bad."

Before they reached the river Nick had explained to Fred and Terry how he came to buy another ranche and had been running it for a year, with one of his men in charge.

"One ranche is enough for one man," he remarked. "It pays splendidly when run in the right way, but loses heavily when it is not. Now, I'm a-going to sell you that ranche for you and Terry to run."

"The deuce!" gasped Fred, and the next moment both he and Terry went flying over their horses' heads, landing in a heap on the ground. Nick knew at once that the two bronchos had bucked. Fred was fortunate enough to hold on to the reins; but Terry's horse got away from him. Nick chased him, however, caught him and brought him back.

"Terry, you were right," laughed Fred, "when you said they were two of a kind."

"Yes, and the swap didn't do any good. Not hurt, are you?"

"No; but my feelings are considerably wounded; for the beast gave no warning and hoisted me out as easily as a turtle could slide off a log into the water. They must have agreed to toss us at the same time."

"Yes, it looks that way; but I'm going to show that broncho that he made a mistake when he took me for a tenderfoot."

"Going to fight it out with him?"

"Why, I've got to, or else walk the rest of the way; and, besides that, I want a little revenge for the scurvy trick he played me. I wasn't even thinking of such a thing, and he actually had me out of the saddle before I suspected his intention."

"Here he is, Terry," said Nick, as he rode up, leading his broncho.

"All right. Now I'll put him through his paces," and he took charge of the broncho, tightened the saddle girth, saw that the bridle was all right, and then sprang into the saddle.

He was scarcely seated ere the broncho began to dance, then put his four hoofs in a bunch and bucked for all he was worth; but this time Terry was on him to stay. He pressed his heels close under his sides and every time the broncho bucked he held on by his spurs, which, of course, made it extremely interesting to the horse. It was so painful that between bucks he kicked and plunged savagely; but when he had bucked three times he found that he was only punishing himself, so he desisted and tried to get rid of his rider by lying down. But Terry was not to be caught that way. He slid off each time, and as the broncho rose to his feet he was in the saddle, with the merciless spurs digging into his sides.

It took about ten or fifteen minutes to convince him that his rider was master of the situation, so he surrendered, standing stock still, waiting for orders.

"That settled him," laughed Nick. "Now, Fred, it's your time."

Fred sprang into the saddle and he went through about the same experience that Terry had, but it lasted longer, for his broncho was of a more stubborn disposition; but he finally conquered him, after a hard fight, which lasted a half hour.

"Now, you'll have no more trouble with him," said Nick, and they started off again in the direction of the river.

They soon came to the old tavern, known as the "Ranchmen's Rest." There were about a dozen cowboys there. The landlord recognized Fred and Terry at once and gave them both a hearty welcome.

"Glad to see you, boys," said he. "I don't think I've ever had a gathering of ranchmen in my house since you left here when your names were not mentioned. Ranchmen come in and inquire whether or not you've been heard from."

"Thank you," laughed Fred, "I didn't know we had so many friends out here. Now, before you waste any more words, tell me how the mother and the two girls are."

"They are well and all right, and they'll be glad to see you."

They soon got with the landlord's wife and his two daughters.

"Well, it does me good to see you," said Terry, as he shook hands with the girls. "I thought you two were beauties when I was here eighteen months ago, but you are prettier than ever."

"Well, I don't see that you've changed any," laughed one of them, "for you talked just that way when we last saw you."

"Haven't changed one bit," he replied. "I'm the same old, good-for-nothing kid, who has an eye for a pretty girl."

Fred complimented them both in pretty much the same strain, and their mother asked the boys if they had come out to stay.

"Really, I can't tell yet," said Fred.

"Yes, they've come to stay," asserted Nick. "I'm going to place them on my Colorado ranche and have them run it, and if I can persuade you two girls to marry them and make them settle down, they'll be all right."

The girls laughed and blushed and the mother reminded Nick that he needed a wife himself.

"Yes, I know that," he laughed, "but not as much as these two boys do. I've settled down to hard work, while they have been roaming all over the world. In fact, they've been clear around the world since they were here."

"What!" exclaimed one of the girls, "been all round the world?"

"Yes, clear around it; went through Europe, Asia, Africa and Japan and crossed the Pacific Ocean, struck 'Frisco and went back to New York, from which place they started, having gone clear around the globe."

The two girls opened their eyes wide, for it was the first time in their young lives they had ever seen such travelers. The elder one proceeded to ask Fred all sorts of questions, showing that while her reading had been limited, she had thought a great deal and was a very level-headed, sensible girl. He gave her all the information he could, but, of course, they had but an hour in which to stop to feed themselves and their horses before resuming their journey. She asked him if he would call again at the tavern and tell her about the various countries he had visited. He replied that he would, whenever opportunity offered; that he didn't know how long he would remain at Taylor's Ranche, or whether or not he would take the Colorado one and try his hand at cattle raising. He promised her, however, that whenever opportunity offered he would run down to the tavern to see the friends he had made on a previous visit.

"We are all your friends here," she said. "I'm sure that father thinks more of you and Mr. Oleott than any two young men he ever met."

"Well, we had a good time of it when we were here last, except for that little shooting match that took place on one Saturday night; but that's such a common thing in this part of the world that most people think nothing of it."

As soon as the horses had finished eating the three took leave of the landlord and his family, sprang into the saddle and rode away in the direction of the river.

"Everything looks just the same as when we first saw this stream," remarked Terry, as his horse stopped to drink after going in a few paces.

"Of course," said Fred. "Did you expect it to dry up?"

"No. I thought, though, it might be running up stream, just for a change."

"Well, you'll live a long time before you see water running up stream, old man."

"Yes, but stranger things than that happen sometimes."

They crossed over and all the way between the river and the Taylor Ranche the two boys recalled many incidents that had happened on their previous visit as they passed the scenes.

They reached the ranche a little before sunset and the first to greet them was the old ranchman, Ben Miller, who gave each of the two boys a hearty welcome. The two Gardner girls ran out, their rosy cheeks dimpled and faces

wreathed in smiles, and welcomed them in a free but feminine way that was extremely charming.

"Great Scott!" said Fred, as he shook hands with them, "you two are the prettiest pictures I've seen since I crossed the Mississippi. How in the world is it that somebody hasn't run away with you?"

"Why, because we didn't want to run away," laughed Mary, the elder of the two sisters. "I don't think there was ever a runaway match where the girl wasn't willing to run."

"Yes, that's so, I guess; but it does seem to me that there ought to be a law passed compelling such girls as you two to hitch up with somebody and make him happy."

"Oh, we'll hitch up quick enough when the right fellow comes along."

"I guess you're hard to please," put in Terry.

"Well, I don't know," laughed Fanny, the younger of the two. "I'm perfectly willing to be pleased."

"That's my fix, too," he laughed. "I wonder what would happen if we both should be pleased."

"Why, the usual thing, of course," she laughed.

"That means, then:

"If I please you and you please me,
We'll both get hitched and happy be."

"Oh, my! just listen at that," exclaimed Mary. "They are flirting with each other desperately."

"Oh, he gets way off his base sometimes," laughed Fred. "When he gets with a pretty girl he quotes the most ex-cruciating poetry you ever heard."

Other cowboys came up and a general handshaking followed, but among them were three or four new men, who were not on the ranche at the time of Fred's former visit. One of them was a big, tall, angular fellow who looked at the two boys in a quizzical sort of way and remarked that they were the first tenderfeet he had seen in a year.

"Yes," laughed Fred, "it's very seldom that tenderfeet stroll so far out this way. We had a good time when we were out here eighteen months ago."

"Oh, you were out here before, eh?"

"Yes."

"Then, you ain't so much a tenderfoot."

"Oh, I don't know," and the two boys strolled up to the house, accompanied by the girls, where they were greeted by old man Gardner and his wife.

"Why, you two don't look a year older," laughed Terry, as he shook hands with the old couple.

"Well, we are getting pretty old," said the old man. "I'm beginning to fear that I'll live too long."

"How's that? You're not tired of living, are you?"

"No, but when I get so old that I can't take care of myself, I shall feel very tired, indeed, and would rather lie down and die than live."

"Well, now, old man," spoke up Nick Taylor, "as long as I live and run this ranche you will have a home on it and everything at your command. I couldn't do without you and Mother Gardner; and as for the two girls, they are the sunshine of the entire ranche."

"Say, Nick," laughed Terry, "what would you do to a fellow who came here to take one of these girls away?"

"I wouldn't do a thing to him," laughed Nick.

"Why in thunder don't you marry one of them?" Terry blurted out.

"Can't make up my mind which one I love best," was the reply. "If the law would allow a man to have two wives I'd be all right."

"No, you wouldn't," laughed Mary, "for neither of us would be content with a half a husband. It's a whole husband or none with us."

"Yes, I know that, and that's what worries me."

That evening all the cowboys who were not watching the cattle, under the starlight, far out over the great ranche, sat on the steps of the piazza and listened to Fred and Terry tell about their trip around the world and their very lively experience in Cuba. They were deeply interested and now and then asked questions. The two girls listened with the deepest interest to their description of London and Paris and other great cities of the world which they had visited, and it was not until a late hour that they retired. But before going to their room Fred and Terry opened their saddle wallets and gave to the old lady and her two daughters a number of very pretty presents, such as the feminine heart always appreciates. For the old man they had the inevitable bag of tobacco. The two girls slept that night with prettier rings on their fingers than they had ever seen before in all their lives.

CHAPTER II.

FRED FEARNOT BUYS A RANCHE AND HE AND TERRY PROCEED TO RUN IT.

The second day after their arrival at the ranche one of the cowboys employed on Nick's Colorado ranche, some twenty miles away, rode over to inform Taylor that they were having considerable trouble with Indians and renegade white men.

"What have they been doing?" Taylor asked.

"Well, there's a party of them rode up to the house yesterday and acted as though they intended to take possession of the place, but on finding that we were prepared for a fight they went away; but this morning, at the foot of the hill, we found where they had killed one of the cattle, carrying away the hide and the meat, leaving only the hoofs and the head."

"Well, that's happened often enough," replied Nick, with a cold glitter in his black eyes, as he turned to Fred and Terry and added:

"I guess we'd better ride over there, boys. Maybe we'll have some fun with those fellows."

"All right," said Fred, and while the bronchos were being saddled he and Terry procured their Winchesters.

"When are you coming back?" Mary Gardner asked of Fred.

"Bless you! how can I know? It may be within a couple of days, maybe not for a week or in months; but we'll ride over on the first opportunity."

In less than a half hour after the arrival of the mes-

senger from the Colorado ranche Nick, Fred and Terry were in the saddle, returning with him. The ranche lay some twenty miles away on a plain that ended abruptly at the foot of some high hills. When they struck the boundary line of the ranche Taylor called their attention to it.

"It's a splendid ranche, boys," said he. "I think the soil is better and it is certainly better watered than my other one. Everything about it is in good shape; only the house is not furnished except in the roughest sort of way, for I don't think any woman has ever been under the roof, unless she was an Indian squaw. It was my mother who furnished up the other one, you know, when she came out to spend the season with me. I want you to take it off of my hands, Fred, furnish up the house and you'll make from ten to twenty thousand dollars a year off of it easily. As for the cattle thieves, when they find out that you are an expert shot and that you shoot to kill, they will cease troubling you. You can have it on your own terms. I will even give you time, so you can pay for it out of the profits on the cattle you raise."

"I've been thinking about it, Nick," said Fred. "I like the wild, free life of the ranche; but I know very little about the details of the business."

"Oh, the men on the place know all about that. All that is needed is executive ability at the head of it, and that I know you have."

"Say, Terry, what would they think of it at home if we should buy a ranche and settle down out here?"

"I guess they'd think we'd gone crazy, Fred," replied Terry, "and the scoldings they would give us by mail would set the mail bags on fire."

"Oh, I don't think it would be so bad as that," laughed Fred. "Father was quite glad for me to come out on my former visit, and he thinks it did me more good than anything I have done since leaving school."

"Well, it did me good, too," returned Terry, "but you know what they said to us at Fredonia, when we started out for Nebraska, that we were expected to return in a few weeks."

"Oh, we'll have to write to them to come out and see us when we get the house furnished up."

"Yes, and we'll get another invitation, in return, to come back home on the next train," laughed Terry.

By this time they were in sight of the houses on the ranche and in the distance they made a very pretty appearance.

"It's a beautiful place and it lies well," remarked Fred.

"I tell you it's one of the best ranches in this part of the country," put in Nick, "but no ranche will pay unless some fellow looks after it himself and rules with an iron hand."

When they reached the house all the buildings were found to be surrounded by a strong fence, that was really a stockade, and inside the inclosure were barns, stables and sheds, besides a comfortable, roomy dwelling house, with a long, low piazza on each side of it. There were only two ranchmen in the inclosure, looking after the horses and preparing the meals for the cowboys out on the range. Nick introduced Fred and Terry to the two cowboys, who, of course, sized them up at once as tenderfeet. Nick at once

began a series of questions concerning things about the ranche and was soon in possession of all he wished to know about the ranche. Things had been going on smoothly, but in rather a slipshod sort of way, with occasional visits by cattle thieves, evidently not all Indians.

Fred and Terry walked about the place, inspected the dwelling house, barns, stables and sheds and found everything substantial. The house, as Nick said, was very poorly furnished. There was not a mattress in it, save such as had been made by two blankets being sewed together and filled with prairie grass. The bedsteads were rude structures made on the place.

"Say, Terry," remarked Fred, "two hundred dollars' worth of furniture would make this a splendid home."

"Of course it would. Are you thinking about taking it?"

"Yes, I am. He doesn't require any cash down, and even if he did it's a bargain at double what he asks. We have money enough to furnish it most beautifully and it's only about thirty miles from here to the railroad, so we can get such things as we need by ordering them and hauling them out."

"If you take it, we'll have to stick to it, rough it and work hard," remarked Terry.

"Yes, but roughing it has no terrors for either of us, you know. We've roughed it before. The first thing I'd do is to watch the men and find one who would be sure to follow my ideas and style of management, if we should happen to be called away, which is something that might occur at any time, as you know. I've about made up my mind to take Nick's offer, and if you'll stick to me I'll share the profits with you."

"Stick to you? Of course I will. There never was a time since we left Avon that you could have any reason to expect that I could ever go back on you, Fred."

"That's so, old man. We'll run this thing together, and as for those cattle thieves, we'll soon make them think that Fred Fearnot's ranche is worse than Death Valley for them."

The next morning Fred informed Nick that he would take the ranche off his hands, with the understanding that if he couldn't make it pay he was to take it back, or else let him sell it for what it would bring.

"That's all right, old man. You may never want to sell it. You'll make it pay for itself in less than five years, besides a handsome living for you two during the time."

The sale was made and Nick Taylor appeared to be greatly relieved that he had turned his ranche over to good hands and had procured a neighbor for what he called a case of emergency. They were to live twenty miles apart, but the bronchos of the plans could easily clear that distance in a couple of hours. Hence they were close neighbors.

That evening Taylor informed all the cowboys on the place that he had sold the ranche to young Fearnot and that he was their employer from that day.

"Let me say to you now, boys," said he, "that neither of them are tenderfeet-strictly speaking. They have fought in Cuba and have fought Apaches side by side with me, and have no more fear for the whizz of a bullet than the buzzing

of a mosquito. Both he and Olcott are honest and square, and they are able to pay their way in cold, hard cash. It is possible that he may make some changes; yet, at the same time, he must rely upon you for information about many little details of the business, so when he asks for information the worst thing in the world you can do is to monkey with him."

There were ten cowboys on the place, all of whom shook hands with Fred, called him boss and said they were willing to work early and late for him.

"That's all I can ask," replied Fred. "I don't know yet what changes will be made, if any at all, but I want to add, if possible, a few more cattle to the ranche, and the brand will be changed from 'T' to 'F.' Those that already have the brand of 'T' will be rebranded. In the course of time it will disappear. Now, I want to say to you that I expect every one of you to come to me and frankly state what your wants are and keep me posted about everything on the ranche, no matter how trifling it may be. As for the cattle thieves who have been living on the beef fleched from the ranche, we must put a stop to that with our Winchesters."

"We haven't any Winchesters," said one of the cow punchers, "nothing but revolvers."

"We'll have them in time, one for each man, with plenty of ammunition, and those among you who are not good marksmen with that weapon must become so by steady practice."

"Don't worry about that," laughed Nick Taylor. "They are splendid shots with the revolver or any other kind of firearm."

"So much the better, then. There'll be a dozen Winchesters on the place, and with that we can take care of a band of fifty with the greatest ease."

Early the next morning Nick left them to return to his own ranche and Fred and Terry were in charge of an estate of several thousand acres, upon which over a thousand head of cattle were grazing.

"Now, Terry, old man," said Fred, "take out your pencil and notebook. One or the other of us has got to go to Denver or Omaha for furniture, bedding and groceries, and we want to put down everything needed so that no mistake will be made."

So they went into each room in the house and figured up what was needed for each one, in order to make it comfortable. They spent nearly the entire day in attending to that. Then, in the matter of groceries, they set down several barrels of flour, tea, coffee, salt, a barrel of sugar and several kinds of sweetmeats, such as could not be had in the West.

They were a long time in making up the list, for fear that they might make some mistake and leave out things that would be greatly needed. The distance to the market in which the things were to be bought was very great. They put in a good supply of envelopes and writing material, as well as many books.

"Now, Terry," continued Fred, "we must get at least ten Winchesters, with an ample supply of ammunition, for it may be that when we have punished some of the cattle thieves they may gather up some of their friends and swoop

down upon us, and if we've got a dozen Winchesters in the house we can bury enough of the raseals to make the soil rich for years to come. I hope we'll have no trouble with them, but we are not going to stand any nonsense from them."

"Of course not," assented Terry, as he put down the Winchesters on the list of things to be bought.

Two or three days passed and the two rode about the ranche, getting the lay of it and the exact boundary lines, accompanied by one of the cow punchers, who had been superintending the ranche for Taylor. At one place they stopped on the brow of a hill, where a few score of cattle were grazing down in the valley. It was a fine view from where they sat on their horses and Fred and Terry were admiring it. Tom Wicklow, the superintendent, called their attention to a little speck on another hill, more than a quarter of a mile away, which looked at that distance like a small stump.

"That's a coyote," said he. "He's waiting to see if he can catch a young calf or find a dead cow somewhere on the plains."

"The deuce you say!" said Fred. "He must be a very small one."

"No, he's of the usual size, but he's a long ways off from us. They are cowardly critters and can run fast enough to make holes in the air."

"Well, just hold my horse a few minutes, please," said Fred, dismounting from the broncho and unslinging his Winchester.

"Why, great rattlers! boss, you don't expect to hit him that far off, do you?" exclaimed Tom.

"Well, if I don't hit him he'll hear the whistle of the bullet," said Fred, as he raised the Winchester to his shoulder, took a quick aim and fired.

The coyote jumped some four or five feet in the air, ran a few paces, fell, rolled over two or three times, got upon his feet and started off down the hill, but soon sank down perfectly still on the ground.

"Hanged if that isn't the best shot I ever saw!" exclaimed Wicklow. "I would have bet a month's pay that you couldn't have touched him once in ten shots."

"I make it a rule not to throw away any lead," said Fred.

"Well, it takes a good shot to hit a cow that far," remarked Wicklow.

"Not a bit of it. If a man will aim straight before he pulls the trigger he's apt to send the bullet where he wants it to go. The great mistake that most hunters make is careless aiming," and with that he sprang into the saddle again, pressed the spurs to his broncho and rode off in the direction of where the coyote lay.

They found him dead, shot square through the body. Wicklow was still astonished at the splendid marksmanship he had witnessed, and he turned to Terry to ask:

"Could you have done that, too?"

"Yes, I think so; but I'm not as good a shot as Fred is. I've seen him do much better than that."

"What's to be done with the carcass?" Fred asked.

"We'll throw him in the ravine at the foot of the hill," said Tom, taking up the dead coyote by the tail and start-

ing down to the foot of the hill, where he threw it into a ravine. Then they rode on further down the western boundary of the ranche, where two of the cow punchers were lying on the ground, smoking, their horses staked near by.

They were watching the cattle down in that quarter.

"How's things getting on, boys?" Fred asked.

"Everything's all right, boss," replied one of them.

"About two hours ago a party of four white men, who said they lived up the river a few miles, passed this way."

"Did you know who they were?" Wicklow asked.

"I know two of them," said the cow puncher. "One of them was Jerry Banks."

"Oh, yes," nodded Wicklow. "He's the one we've got to watch."

"Who is he?" Fred asked.

"Oh, he's a pretty tough frontiersman, who owns a place a few miles up the river, who frequently buys cattle and drives them to the railroad station for sale, but he never raises any himself. Every ranche owner for a hundred miles around is suspicious. He has several times rode over to the house and acted as though he wanted to provoke a row. He always has some four or five white men with him and sometimes as many Indians. He seems to be on good terms with the redskins all the time. Whenever we find that one of our cattle has been killed and only the head and hoofs left it's generally over on this side of the ranche, showing that the thieves came from the direction of his place."

"Well, I think we'll soon put a stop to that sort of business," remarked Fred, "and if it can be stopped in no other way, the thieves must be shot to death."

"That's the only way to do it, boss," said one of the cow punchers. "There ain't no sheriffs out here nor jails."

"Well, I guess we won't need any."

They rode on further down the boundary till they struck the lower end of the ranche and then turned eastward, till they struck two others of the cowboys and found everything going on all right. Still further on they found a couple of bulls in a furious fight and they stopped to look on.

"Those are valuable animals, Wicklow," said Fred, "and they should not be permitted to damage each other with their horns. Is there no way to put a stop to the fight?"

"None that I know of," replied the superintendent. "We have to let them fight it out till one or the other quits and takes to his heels."

"What's the matter with dashing at them on horseback and frightening them?" Terry asked.

"We are liable to start a stampede, when several hundred cattle will make a break and run two or three miles before they stop, by which time maybe a dozen cows will be killed or have limbs broken. A stampede is a mighty bad thing to have, and the more cattle in it the worse it is."

"All right, then. That's something worth knowing. Let them fight it out."

The two bulls fought and bellowed furiously for several minutes, until one of them gave way and left his opponent master of the field. The victor was not satisfied. He held up his head and bellowed and the next moment came charging at the three horses.

CHAPTER III.

FRED ENTERTAINS SUSPICIOUS VISITORS, WHOM HE ASTONISHES WITH HIS DEADLY MARKSMANSHIP.

On seeing the mad bull charge down upon them, Wicklow said to Fred and Terry:

"Ride off briskly in different directions and you'll find that he will stop before going a hundred yards."

"But what if he gives chase to us?" Terry asked.

"He won't do it, and if he did a broncho is the fastest runner."

They put spurs to their horses, started off in different directions and the bull, after following Terry about fifty yards, came to a full stop, bellowed and pawed the earth for a few minutes, during which time Terry circled around and joined Wicklow and Fred, after which they rode away together. The superintendent told them many things about the traits of cows and bulls and of the best way to manage them. He knew all about the business, as he had been for more than ten years rounding up cattle.

"They have to be watched day and night," remarked Fred, "and often during severe storms the men are as much exposed to it as the cattle themselves."

"They are used to that and don't mind it," said Wicklow.

"Yes, I know they are used to a rough life, but still I think a man should at least have shelter from the elements, when inclement weather sets in. I intend to get tents for their use."

"Well, I don't know of a ranche in the West where the cowboys use tents," remarked Wicklow.

"That may be. It's all right for a man to take the rain when he's out on duty, but when he lies down to sleep no one can do it with a heavy rain pelting him in the face, and no matter how hard and tough one may be, he is not proof against rheumatism. I intend to have a half a dozen waterproof tents shipped out, for use on the ranche, so that their clothes, blankets, ammunition and provisions may be kept dry.

"Well, the boys won't object to it," laughed Wicklow.

"Of course they won't. I intend to make them as comfortable as possible, pay them their wages regularly and will expect every man to do his full duty."

"Yes, yes; they'll do that. These are all steady fellows we have here."

A couple of hours later they fetched up at the house again, where one of the men had dinner ready for them. It was nothing but smoked beef and coarse corn bread, with extremely muddy coffee, without sugar."

"Is this the sort of coffee you fellows have been drinking out here?" Fred asked.

"Yes," said Wicklow, "and we think it is good coffee."

"Well, I'll show you how to make coffee to-night," and he looked up at the cowboy who had prepared the meal and added:

"It's a crime against a man's whole system to give him coffee that has been boiled."

"How can you make coffee without boiling it?" the cowboy asked.

"Easy enough. Put the coffee in the pot, pour boiling water upon it and then set it close enough to the fire to keep it hot, but not let it boil, and in five or six minutes you've not only got all the essence of the bean, but it will be as clear as brandy. Now, when you boil it, twenty-five or thirty per cent. of the good flavor goes off in steam and leaves the coffee flat."

"Well, I never heard of coffee being made without boiling it," replied the cowboy cook.

"Well, it should never be boiled, nor tea either. I'll make the coffee for supper to-night, just to show you the difference. I've drunk coffee in various countries in a trip around the world, and in almost all countries they have different ways of making it, and nowhere in the world do expert cooks boil it."

That evening Fred made the coffee and the cowboys were amazed at finding it as clear as brandy and delicious with the aroma of the bean. It seemed like a revelation to them, for up to that time their coffee was always muddy and flat.

"The rule is," laughed Fred, "that whatever you have to do, try to do it well. The same rule holds in making tea, never to let it boil, but simply to let the leaves steep in the boiling water poured upon them, at the same time keeping it well covered. To a man who is fond of a cup of good coffee, the secret of making it is one highly prized."

That evening it was agreed that Terry, accompanied by one of the cowboys, was to ride to the railroad station and take the train for Denver, where he was to purchase all the things put down on the list which he and Fred had made up. They were off at daylight, and it was expected Terry would be gone three or four days. The man was to return to the station on the third day and wait there for him.

Late in the afternoon the cowboy returned with the report that Terry had taken the train all right for Denver. Fred, of course, devoted himself to the task of mastering all the details of cattle raising.

The day after Terry left four white men, dressed as cowboys, rode up to the house and sang out to one of the men who was attending to one of the horses, inquiring if Wicklow was at home.

"Yes," said the rancher, "but he's somewhere out on the range and only the boss and I are here."

"Oh, is Taylor here?" the spokesman of the party of four asked.

"No, Taylor don't own the ranche any more. He's sold it."

"Ah, I haven't heard that," and the four men dismounted, hitched their horses to the picket fence, entered the gate and were half way to the house, when Fred walked out on the piazza.

The four men were big, rough-looking fellows, full bearded and long-haired, each carrying a revolver in his belt. The spokesman was a brawny-looking chap, apparently some thirty-five or forty years of age.

"Are you the boss of this ranche?" he asked of Fred.

"Yes, I guess I am. At least, I own it."

There was nothing of the cowboy about Fred in manner or dress, so the four men sat on the edge of the piazza and looked up at him, and, naturally, sized him up as the son

of some rich man in the East, who had bought a ranche for him in order to make him work for his living.

"Well, what's your name?" the spokesman asked.

"My name is Fearnot. What's yours, if it is a fair question?"

"My name is Banks, Jerry Banks. My place is up the river here, some seven miles above you."

"Yes, I've heard of you," said Fred, "as a man who frequently drives cattle to the railroad for sale, yet raises none on his ranche."

"Yes, I buy and sell. My ranche isn't large enough for me to raise cattle at a profit. Have you got any cattle for sale?"

"No, on the contrary I want to buy about five hundred head more."

"Well, maybe I could sell you some."

"I prefer to buy them from those who raise them," remarked Fred.

"What's the matter with your buying them from me? Do you think that I steal cattle?"

"No, you don't look like a man who is in business for his health. If you buy cattle off of some other ranche, you mean to sell them at a profit, so I can save that profit by buying them at first hand myself. I have some little idea about business."

"Well, what's the matter with letting a man make a little profit?"

"I've no objection in the world to a man making all the profit he can. When I have to buy anything I'll go where I can buy it cheapest. When I have to sell, I want all I can get."

"Well, that's a pretty good rule," replied Banks. "Are you out here by yourself?"

"No, I have a partner, a young man about my own age, who is not on the ranche here to-day."

"Have you ever roughed it on a ranche before?"

"Yes, I've seen a good deal of ranche life, but have had very little experience in cattle raising."

"What are you going to do about the redskins taking a cow once in a while for fresh beef?"

"Why, I expect to put a stop to that. Redskin or white-skin who takes any cattle of mine, without my consent, does it at a very great risk."

"Why, will you fight about it?"

"Of course I will. You don't suppose I'll just sit down and let them come over and get beef whenever they want it, do you?"

"Well, if you shoot a redskin about fifty or a hundred will come down on your ranche and wipe it out. I've found it best to keep on friendly terms with them. That's one reason why I don't raise any cattle, but buy and drive them to the railroad, not keeping them long enough to give them a chance to get any of them."

"Well, I'm here to raise cattle, and those who try to get them without paying for them, white, black or red, will find it a risky business."

"Do you know how to fight redskins?" another one of the men asked, with an incredulous look in his face.

"I don't know that I do, but I'm a pretty good shot and am not afraid to shoot."

"You talk a little like a tenderfoot," laughed one of the others.

"Well, I suppose I am a tenderfoot. I was taken for one over at Ranchmen's Rest once by a big cow puncher, who said that I'd either have to drink with him or eat lead. I didn't do either. He chewed the lead himself."

"Oh, you shot him, did you?"

"Well, I had to."

"Did you kill him?"

"No, simply broke his pistol arm. Men who try that sort of game on others are crazy fools and very often get severely punished. A square, honest man will never attempt to force another one to do anything that he doesn't wish to do, unless it is something to which he has agreed. I've heard of men out West here drawing pistols and making people dance to avoid having their toes shot off. Men who do that are born cowards, who never try it on those who they think are armed and would shoot. One of them tried it on a little fellow from Cincinnati once, at a station near the upper end of Yellowstone Park. The little fellow danced his jig and when it was over with and the other man had put his gun up, he drew his little pop and began pumping lead right into his stomach, and he lay down and died right on the spot, living long enough to admit that he was the biggest fool in that part of the country."

"Have you got any whisky on the place?" Banks asked.

"Not a drop, nor do I intend ever to keep any on the ranche."

"Temperance man, eh?"

"Well, yes; I suppose I am. I never drink any intoxicants myself, nor do I offer it to others."

"Well, you'll feel very lonesome out here, young man, without any liquor to drink."

"Not as long as I can get any water I won't," he replied.

The four visitors sat there on the edge of the piazza a couple of hours. Then Wicklow rode up from a visit down to the lower end of the ranche and his greeting of Banks was by no means very cordial. Banks noticed it and remarked:

"What's the matter with you, Wicklow? You don't seem to be glad to see us."

"Well, I'm not glad," was the reply. "You've never been a friend of mine since I first landed on this ranche."

"Well, I haven't got anything against you. What have you got against me?"

"Nothing in the world except the company you keep. Banks. I've seen you several times with a party of Apaches, and they are a little too strong for a decent white man's stomach."

"That's nothing. I make it a rule to keep friendly with the redskins."

"So do I, but I don't associate with them. They occasionally kill a cow on our place, but we never find it out until they get away with the hide and meat."

"That's the reason I don't keep any on my place. I buy a lot of cattle and drive them off to the railroad at once. The redskins claim that the whites have destroyed the buffalo and other big game and have left them to starve, and that they should not be blamed if they killed a cow once in a while."

"Well, they mustn't come around here killing any cows," remarked Fred, "for if they get caught at it they'll find out the nature of my objection, and if you're on very friendly terms with them, you might convey that information to some of them."

"Oh, none of those that I meet are engaged in that sort of business. It's only a few strollers, who have been unlucky in hunting big game, so they kill a cow to make up for their failure."

A few minutes after Wicklow's return to the house one of the cowboys came dashing up on his broncho with the report that four Indians were stealing a cow down in the ravine, about three miles away, toward the western boundary of the ranche.

"Saddle my horse quick," cried Fred, as he dashed into the house, took down his Winchester and put on his cartridge belt.

"Going to tackle 'em by yourself?" Banks asked.

"Oh, there's one of my men down there, and the one who brought the news will go back with me. There's three, that's enough, unless you choose to lend a hand as a neighbor."

"Well, we'll go on, but we don't care to do anything to make the redskins mad with us."

"And yet you claim to be a white man," said Fred, looking him full in the face.

"Yes, I claim to be a white man, but I'm not a fool. The Apaches are strong enough to wipe us out and I don't care to give them any excuse to do so."

"Well, I'm glad I'm not your kind of a white man. I'd be ashamed to look my mother in the face if I were," and with that he sprang into the saddle and dashed off at full speed, followed by the messenger who had brought the news.

"Say, Bill," said Banks, turning to one of his companions, "that kid is going to get wiped out. Let's go along and see it."

"All right, come ahead," and the four visitors hurried out to their horses, leaped into the saddle and dashed away in the wake of Fred and his cow puncher.

Fred rode hard and fast, and was at least four hundred yards ahead of Banks and his party, when he came in sight of the redskins, who were engaged in packing the beef on their ponies, ready to take it away. They were at least an eighth of a mile away. Fred stopped his broncho, raised his rifle to his shoulder, took deliberate aim and fired. A redskin threw up his hands, staggered away and sat down on the ground. Another one ran out from behind his pony and got the next bullet. The third one, having strapped a fore quarter of beef to his pony, sprang upon the little animal and dashed away, leaving his two comrades to look out for themselves. Fred fired at the pony and wounded him. He stopped to kick and prance around, while the Apache urged him with all his might to keep on. A fourth shot struck the Indian, and he went limping forward, in a half run, until a fifth shot sent him sprawling on the ground.

"Great rattlers!" exclaimed Banks, as he and his companions rode up, "that beats all the shooting I ever saw, and if you don't bring the Apaches down on us it will be a miracle."

"Let them come," said Fred. "They can't come here and take my cattle without a fight," and with that he rode forward, accompanied by his cowboy and followed by Banks and the others. He was joined by two more of his ranchmen by the time he reached the two wounded Indians.

"So you are the fellows who have been taking my cattle, are you?" Fred asked.

The Apache made no reply, for he was badly hurt. He was pressing his hands to his side and it looked as though he would soon give up the ghost. The other one, however, was not so badly injured.

Fred ordered the beef to be taken off the ponies, and, turning to the wounded redskin, said:

"Every man, white, black or red, found stealing my cattle will be shot."

"Injun pay for meat," grunted the Redskin.

"Well, you should pay for it before you kill it."

"Injun pay," repeated the red villain.

"Yes, I know how you pay. I pay for it myself with bullets. You may as well understand now as at any other time, that I will shoot to kill redskin or white man caught stealing my cattle, and don't you forget it."

"Injun won't forget," and the redskin's eyes gleamed with a vengeful light as he spoke.

"All right, it will be easy for you to remember."

It seemed that Banks and his three friends knew the Apaches and they volunteered their services to assist them on their ponies, and help them back in the direction of their village, which was a score of miles away up the river.

CHAPTER IV.

FRED TEACHES CHIEF RED DOG A LESSON.

When Banks and his friends took charge of the three wounded Apaches, Fred ordered his cowboys to take charge of the fresh beef and convey it to the house and have it properly cured. While they were doing so he informed them that he had ordered Winchesters for every man on the ranche and that each man was to carry one and use it to shoot down every cattle thief caught in the act of killing or stealing his cattle.

"It's the only way to put a stop to it," he added.

"You're right, boss," said one of the cow punchers. "None of them have been caught at it heretofore."

"Well, you must keep a sharp watch for it. One man must ride leisurely entirely around the ranche every day, and if strangers, white or red, are anywhere in sight, he must keep them in view until they go away. I've taken this ranche for the purpose of making it pay, and I intend to make it the hottest place in the West for cattle thieves."

"You're a good shot, boss," said one of the men.

"Yes, so I am, and my partner, Terry, is also. But every one of you can learn to shoot just as well if you take the pains to do so. Be sure of your aim before pulling the trigger always, for sometimes a miss means your own death. Never shoot at a man to scare him, but always to hit. Never provoke a fight, but when one is forced on

you, bring it to a finish like a flash. This thing may make trouble for us with the Apaches, but if they come down here to call us to account, we must let them understand that we will stand no nonsense from them. I am satisfied that Banks and his crowd are in league with them, and if they show their hand be ready to wipe them out without a moment's hesitation."

They reached the house and at once proceeded to cure the beef in the way peculiar to ranchmen, after which he turned to Superintendent Wicklow and remarked:

"I want two of the best cows on the ranche driven up here and kept in the stall, for I intend to have milk and butter. It's one of the strangest things in the world, that on a place on which there are a thousand cattle, neither milk or butter can be had. We might as well have eggs and chickens in the greatest abundance as not. There is no use in living like savages, just because we're beyond the borders of civilization. This way of eating jerked beef three times a day, three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, doesn't suit me."

"Well, if you're going to have butter and eggs and chickens," laughed Wicklow, "you want one or two women on the place to look after them."

"That doesn't necessarily follow. It's just as easy to look after small things as big ones. Success in every line of business depends upon looking after the small details and seeing that everything goes on just right. There's no reason in the world why we shouldn't have a hundred bee hives around the place instead of depending upon wild honey found here and there in the timbers."

A half hour later one of the cow punchers said to another:

"The boss is young, but he has a will and a head of his own."

"You bet he has," assented his companion. "Wicklow told me yesterday that he killed a coyote more than a quarter of a mile away."

"Yes, I heard about that. Tom says he aimed quickly and the coyote jumped some four or five feet in the air, and the way he peppered those Apaches showed that he wasn't throwing away bullets, but meant business."

When night came on Wicklow remarked to Fred that, as they had no watch dog on the ranche, he was apprehensive that vengeful Apaches might seek to destroy the building by fire.

"Glad you mentioned that, Wicklow," said Fred. "We'll take turns at guarding the place, the guards tramping slowly around the enclosure on the outside during the time of their watch, say two hours long, and I'll take my turn with the boys."

So he arranged it that way and Fred spent two hours on guard duty after midnight, but nothing turned up to excite suspicion. About noon the next day two of Banks' men rode up, accompanied by a big Apache redskin.

"Fearnot," said one of the men, "this is Red Dog, one of the chiefs of the Apache tribe. He is very angry at the shooting of three of his warriors yesterday and he wants to talk with you about it."

"Does he speak English?" Fred asked.

"Yes; enough to be understood."

"Well, what does he want to know?"

The redskin looked at him, and, seeing that he was a mere boy, assumed a very contemptuous air and asked:

"You shoot Injun?"

"Yes," said Fred, "I shot three redskin thieves yesterday who had killed one of my cattle."

"Injun hungry; must have meat," said Red Dog.

"That's all right, but I'm not raising meat for Indians who don't pay for it. I have no right to go to your place and take anything belonging to you without your consent, and if you, or any of your people, come on my ranche to take my cattle without my consent, you will be shot."

"Injun shoot, too," said Red Dog.

"Oh, yes. The time was when there were more Indians than grass seed on the plains, but they have faded away before the bullets of the white man, just because they wanted to take things that didn't belong to them. If a white man or Indian comes to me, claiming to be hungry, I will feed him and send him on his way in peace; but if he comes to kill my cattle without my consent, I'll kill him if I can. You have a pony out there which seems to be a good one. If I or one of my men should attempt to steal him you would shoot him and it would be right. You redskins may just as well learn now as at some future time, that white men will defend their property against all the world."

"White boy heap big talk," grunted Red Dog.

"Yes, and red man heap big fool," retorted Fred. "The Great Spirit seems to have touched his head till he doesn't know anything."

"That's not the way to talk, Fearnot," said one of Banks' men, who had come with the Indian.

"Well, that's the way I talk, and I want every Apache to understand that I'm going to defend my property, and I'll shoot a white cattle thief just as quick as I would a red one. They have been plundering this ranche for the last year, until the owner of it sold it at a loss, because he couldn't attend to two ranches at the same time. If you are a friend of this Red Dog, the best service you can render him and his people is to suggest that they let the cattle on this ranche alone."

"You'll find it much cheaper to keep on friendly terms with them," said the other.

"Well, if I have to purchase their friendship by letting them come on my ranche, kill my cattle and take the hide and meat away without protest, you can bet your life that I won't do it."

"White boy shoot three Injuns for one cow," remarked Red Dog. "Injun wants three cows."

"Three cows will cost you twenty-one dollars; seven dollars apiece," remarked Fred.

"You'd better let him have the cows," said one of the white men.

"Not on your life," returned Fred. "I'll fight the whole Apache tribe before I'll pay one cent of tribute, and let me say to you that you are a queer kind of a white man, for you seem to be backing up cattle thieves."

"We are doing nothing of the sort, sir. We are simply keeping on good terms with the tribe, else we couldn't live here."

"Well, I'm going to live here and defend my property, if I have to demand a regiment of American soldiers to help me out, and if any are sent here you will be apt to share the same fate that the redskins do. I want to live at peace with everybody, but you can bet your life that I'll fight to the death for the smallest calf on this ranche. If Red Dog has come here to demand that I pay three cows for killing three of his thieving tribe, the sooner you take him away the better. I'll stand no nonsense from him. His men have already killed one of my cows, and were it not that I have the meat in the house, I'd make him pay for it right now or blow a hole through him."

At that Red Dog became indignant, gave a grunt, whipped out his revolver and began flourishing it menacingly. They were standing on the piazza of the house. Fred looked at the brawny redskin and made up his mind that the villain was hunting for trouble. He sprang at him, caught him by the wrist to avoid being shot by the revolver held in that hand, tripped his feet from under him, causing him to fall heavily to the floor of the piazza.

The next moment he wrenched the revolver from his grasp, thus disarming him. Red Dog uttered a shrill whoop and sprang to his feet. Fred went at him in fine pugilistic style, knocked him right and left, forcing him back until he stepped off the piazza and fell flat on his back on the ground.

No historian has ever recorded the fact of an American Indian understanding even the simplest rules of sparring. Red Dog was no exception to the rule. He gave war after war whoop and tried in vain to clutch Fred, but the latter's splendid science in the art of sparring enabled him to knock him about as though he was a mere punching bag. The redskin's two white friends, who came with him, stood by looking on, not daring to interfere, because Wicklow and two cowboys were also at hand, armed with revolvers. So Red Dog had to submit to the punishment Fred inflicted, until at last he ceased to resist, but sat on the ground, looked up at the masterful young pale face and merely grunted.

"Are you an Apache chief and can't fight a white boy?" asked Fred with a sneer. "Why, you couldn't fight a papoose. If you have a squaw she ought to lay you across her knee and spank you with her moccasin. You are nothing but a cattle thief. You couldn't fight a skunk."

"Injun fight with knife and gun," remarked Red Dog.

"Yes, and you'd get killed in just one minute. Now, see here," and Fred turned to one of the two white men who had come with the Indian, "here's his revolver. If you want to take him back with you alive, hold on to him until you get him outside of the inclosure, for if he makes an effort to use it he'll be a dead Indian before you can say Jack Robinson."

The fellow took the revolver, thrust it into his pocket and turned toward the gate, calling for Red Dog and his comrade to follow him. They did so and when he had mounted his horse his revolver was turned over to him. They rode off without uttering a word and Wicklow remarked to Fred:

"As long as you live that redskin will be your implacable enemy."

"Of course. While I haven't had much personal experience with Indians, I've read enough about them to know that the best way to deal with them is to show them that you're not afraid of them. He came here with those two fellow to bulldoze me into paying three cattle for wounding those three rascals yesterday, and had I yielded to the demand it would have brewed no end of trouble for us. They will understand from this time out that such nonsense as that won't go with us."

"But suppose they come down twenty or thirty strong on us?" Wicklow asked. "What are we to do?"

"Fight," replied Fred. "This picket fence is a pretty strong stockade and it will take a bullet from a Winchester to go through it."

"Well, a good many of them have Winchesters."

"Well, in a day or two more we'll have a dozen ourselves, and if they want to stir up a little war we can have it."

That night they took turns at guarding the premises, but as on the night before, nothing occurred to disturb their tranquillity, and on the following morning Fred sent one of the men with a two-horse wagon to the railroad station to meet Terry.

"Why do you send the wagon?" Wicklow asked, "when a horse and saddle would be better?"

"Because I'm sure that Terry will bring back a lot of things with him which couldn't be carried on horseback. It wouldn't surprise me if his entire purchase came by express."

As soon as the wagon was gone Fred and Wicklow mounted their bronchos and began making a circuit of the ranche, each with a Winchester lying across his saddle bow. It took them three or four hours to make it, but they found everything all right, each man on his post, and the cattle all doing well. During the ride Fred shot another coyote and that was the only incident of the day out of the usual. The rest of the time was spent in fixing up two extra stalls for milch cows, for it was absolutely necessary to keep them in such places for a month or so in order to have them become accustomed to being handled by the man who was to milk them.

Another day passed and the wagon returned with Terry and the driver, loaded with his purchases, and another load remained behind at the station to be sent for.

"I brought them along with me, Fred," laughed Terry, "as it was too far to the station to leave the goods to the uncertainty of the freight train. It cost a little more, but it will be cheaper in the end."

"That's right, old man. I remarked to Wicklow that you'd probably do just that very thing. I see you've brought the rifles."

"Yes, and the ammunition, too; a thousand rounds for each one."

"I am glad you did."

The wagon was driven inside the inclosure and the goods unloaded on the piazza. The cowboys opened wide their eyes at the many things that had been bought. The groceries were all stored at the main room in a corner and the bedroom furniture placed in the others.

"Fred, it will take two more loads to bring out the balance," remarked Terry, after the wagon had been unloaded.

"Then we'll send both wagons, for the sooner we get them here the better."

That evening every cowboy on the ranche received a brand new Winchester, with a cartridge belt filled with cartridges.

"Now, boys," said Fred, "we don't know when the Apaches are going to sneak down upon us. Every one of you is a good shot with a revolver, because you understand the theory of shooting straight. Now, these Winchesters can bring down a man at the distance of a mile if you can hit him. I want you to practice at a half-mile range until you can hit the bull's-eye at that distance, and remember what I have told you before, to make sure of your aim before pulling the trigger. There is a leather strap to each one, by which you can swing it over your shoulders."

The next morning two wagons went off toward the station, with two men in each one, armed with Winchesters. They returned with the balance of the goods, and until a late hour in the night they were kept busy placing things in ship-shape. They had an ample supply of provisions to fall back upon whenever they wished to do so.

Of course Fred had posted Terry about his trouble with Red Dog and the cattle thieving Indians.

"We'll be sure to hear from them again soon," he remarked, "but we must act on the defensive quickly, and at the same time prevent any encroachment or imposition."

"Yes, I heard about that fellow Jerry Banks at the railroad station," remarked Terry. "I was asked there if I had yet run up against him. I said I had not, and I was warned to be on the lookout for him, as he was a desperate, shrewd swindler, who, whenever the officers of the law got after him, invariably sought refuge among the Apaches. I was told that he acted as agent for them in selling cattle that they stole."

"How does he manage to sell cattle, with various brands on them, when he doesn't raise them himself?" Fred asked.

"I asked that very question," replied Terry, "and a cattle buyer told me that Banks and his men pretended to be speculators, who bought up cattle in small bunches, wherever they could find them, and drove them to the railroad, and that they had no means of knowing whether it was true or false."

"He wanted to sell me some cattle, but I told him I wouldn't buy from him, as I wanted no cattle on my place, except such as had my brand; that I expected soon to sell off all those branded 'T' and have none left except those bearing the letter 'F.' We have Winchesters enough now to enable us to stand off a band of fifty of them if we keep inside the stockade, but as we have no means of fighting fire, we have to keep up a regular night watch until we can get one or two dogs of the right breed, who will give the alarm on the approach of strangers."

"By George, Fred, I came within an ace of buying a big bloodhound in Denver, as a fellow who had him was dead broke and wanted a hundred dollars for him. He was a magnificent dog, with courage enough to tackle a grizzly."

"I'm sorry you didn't buy him, old man. We ought to have at least two, and one of us may yet have to take the trip to get them."

CHAPTER V.

FRED'S TWO BIG RANCH DOGS WIN A FIGHT.

The next few days were passed in getting things in ship-shape for comfort about the house, and two happier boys than Fred and Terry would have been hard to find anywhere in the great West. They were roughing it, it is true, but it was in a way that they enjoyed, and they lacked for but few things that they needed. The fact that they were masters of a large ranche of several thousand acres, with more than a thousand head of cattle on it, gave to each one a masterful feeling, and they felt their responsibility to the fullest limit. They knew they were threatened with danger from the Apaches and a few renegade whites, but they were conscious of their tremendous power of self defence in the one dozen Winchesters on the ranche. They had agreed upon signals that would summon to the house those of the cowboys who were watching the cattle either day or night.

Fred was not one to be caught napping. He never let a night pass without placing a guard on the outside of the inclosure as soon as the stars came out, as he was determined that they should not burn him out or wipe him out by a night raid. Both of them took their turn, just the same as the cowboys, on guard duty.

"We'll have to keep this up until we can get a couple of good watch dogs, Terry," remarked Fred one evening.

"Yes, of course. If we had a good watch dog inside the inclosure no stranger could come within a hundred yards of it without his scenting him and giving the alarm. They can be had in either Denver or Omaha. We can, perhaps, get the station agent to write to the agent at the end of the line to procure one or two for us."

A few days later one of the cowboys was sent to the railroad station with a letter from Fred asking the station agent to write to the agent at Omaha to secure a couple of big, fierce watch dogs, regardless of cost, and a week later the agent notified him that the dogs could be had for fifty dollars each. He immediately supplied the money and the dogs were shipped. They were big, fine fellows, just two years old. They were brought out and were so well fed and kindly treated that within forty-eight hours they were on friendly terms with everybody on the place. They were big, masterly fellows, playful, full of life, but lacked training. Both Fred and Terry set to work to train them and soon had them so well in hand that they obeyed every call.

A few days after their arrival the boys were astonished to see Nick Taylor ride up to the house. Of course they received him with a glad welcome.

"Great Scott! boys," exclaimed Nick, "what a change you've made in the place! You are as comfortably fixed here as one could wish to be."

"Yes," laughed Fred, "we had the money and we thought it very foolish to sleep on the floor when we could get beds and bedding, and, aside from that, we've at least a year's supply of provisions laid in, so that we won't have to live exclusively on jerked beef. We'll soon have turkeys and chickens in abundance, and we already have milk and butter three times a day."

"Well, well," laughed Nick, "you two manage like a couple of old women. Who does the milking and churning?"

"Oh, we've got a man on the place who can pump out a cow about as quick as any farmer you ever saw, and as for churning, we take our turn at it every morning. All we lack now is a piano and a couple of pretty girls to play on it."

"Yes, and I'll wager, if the truth was known, you two are figuring on having it turn out just that way."

"Well, it wouldn't be a bad idea, would it?" laughed Terry.

"No, but you'd better wait awhile before you carry it into effect."

"We're in no hurry," laughed Fred.

"Where in thunder did you get those dogs?" exclaimed Nick, as the two big canines came round to the front of the house, following one of the cowboys.

"Sent East for them," laughed Terry. "Fred shot three thieving Apaches for killing one of our cows and ever since then we've been apprehensive that they might slip up on us in the night and burn us out. Did you see any of the boys on the ranche as you came up?"

"Yes, I saw two of them."

"Did you notice that they had Winchesters strapped over their backs?"

"Well, we have a rifle for each man on the place, and I'm thinking that in a little while cattle stealing will stop on this ranche."

"That's right, that's right. Shoot down every man, red or white, caught stealing."

"That's just what we are going to do," put in Fred. "That fellow Jerry Banks and three of his men called on us and we treated them like white men, but let them understand that we are running this ranche to raise cattle for sale, not for others to steal. He wanted to sell me some cattle, but I told him that I would not buy any except from those who raised them."

"That was a pretty plain hint," laughed Nick. "What did he say to it?"

"Oh, he wanted to know if I thought that he was a cattle thief. I told him that had nothing to do with it; that if he bought them from a ranche he did it with the intention of making a profit, and that I could save that much by buying them from the ranche myself."

Nick chuckled and remarked:

"Well done; that let him down easy."

Then Fred related to him how Banks and his three companions had witnessed the shooting of the three Apaches who were caught stealing one of the cows, which they had just killed.

"I'm hanged if they didn't take charge of the redskins and take them back to their village."

"That shows he is standing in with them," remarked Nick.

"Of course it does; and now see here, old man, how did you leave the two girls, Mary and Fanny Gardner?"

"Oh, they are well and chipper; but I wonder why one or the other of you hasn't been over to see us before this."

"Well, you see we've been busy. We've had to straight-

en out things, adopt new rules and start things going just right. The truth is, we are apprehensive all the time of a visit from a gang of Apaches, so we keep pretty close together on the ranche, to be ready for them when they show up."

"Oh, they are not on the warpath now," remarked Nick.

"No; but they're on the cow path; and as we've wounded three of them, they have it in for us, without putting on any war paint."

Nick greatly admired the two big watch dogs, one of whom was named Grip and the other Grab.

"Very good names," he laughed. "Do they answer to them?"

"Yes, readily. Terry and I have taken a great deal of time and patience in training them. They will stand up or lie down, at command, and instantly cease barking, when told, together with a number of other things that we have thought necessary to teach them. There was a coyote in sight yesterday, and I let them out, for them to chase him, and the way the measly little prairie whelp got away from them made them really feel ashamed of themselves. I believe a well seared coyote could outrun an ostrich."

"Yes, I believe he could," laughed Nick, "for I've never seen anything yet that could outrun him. They are cowardly little whelps, and I believe that if a bunch of firecrackers could be tied to the tail of one of them, he'd actually run out of his skin and leave it lying on the ground. What luck are you having now with the cattle?"

"Splendid! I think we've had an addition of over three hundred calves within the last month, and we haven't lost one per cent. of them. With our Winchesters we can knock over a coyote a quarter of a mile away."

"Oh, come off, now," laughed Nick.

"Well, it's been done several times," laughed Fred; "and there are men on the place who will make affidavit to it."

"Well, that's good shooting; but I guess nobody but you and Terry have been able to do it so far."

"Yes, two of the men have done as well. They've all taken particular pains to become good marksmen. I tell you that if all twelve of us got together inside of this stockade, we could stand off a band of a hundred Indians with the greatest ease.

"Now, Nick, I'd like to buy about five hundred more cows, if I could get them at the right figure."

"I can get them for you," said Nick, "some time next month; but they would all be branded with the letter 'J.'"

"That's all right. It could very easily be turned into an 'F.' Make the trade for me and have them driven over. It's a pretty rough sort of life out here; but I'm in love with it, and I'm going to make this thing pay."

"Well, I knew you could do it; but let me tell you something. You recollect the Griswolds, at whose place we stopped after we had that running fight with the Apaches?"

"Yes; what about them?"

"Well, the old man rode up to my place the other day, and said he had heard that you were out here again, and wanted to know where you were. I told him that you had bought this place and was going to settle down as a ranche-man. He seemed to be both astonished and delighted, and

remarked that he and some of the girls would ride over to see you soon."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Terry, "you know how the eldest girl was stuck on him, don't you?"

"Yes, and I've never met her since then when she didn't inquire after Fred. The last time I met her I told her I had heard that you were both somewhere in Europe, making your way around the world. She's a good, sweet girl; but seems to be completely hypnotized by Fred, here."

"Well, I'm sure I didn't intend it," said Fearnot. "Of course if they come over here, we'll treat them royally; and see here, Nick, it won't do for you to go back home without being able to tell the Gardner girls that we asked you to bring them over with you the next time you came."

"Well, if I didn't tell them that, I think they would both be disappointed," laughed Nick.

"They are jolly good girls," put in Terry. "Tell them we've got a violin and a banjo, and that when they do come over, we'll give them a royal breakdown. Of course they had the right to expect us to go over there but new beginners have no time to go sparking around the country."

"All right," laughed Nick; "when I come over again, I'll bring them both with me."

Taylor spent the night with them, and along about midnight they were all awakened by the fierce growling of the two dogs. It was a very dark night, when objects could not be seen twenty feet away. Fred, Terry and Nick, armed with Winchesters, got up and passed outside of the enclosure, taking the two dogs with them. Fred held Grip, while Terry kept a hold on Grab. They passed around to the rear of the barn and stood there, in the blackness of the night, waiting and listening. The two dogs had every bristle erect and fairly trembled with eagerness to spring forward at something in the dark. Of course the boys could see nothing; but at last they determined to let the two dogs loose, whispering to them:

"At 'em, boy;" and they darted away into the prairie grass, and some fifty feet distant a tremendous fight ensued between them and a party of Indians and at least a couple of white men, whose voices betrayed them.

In the darkness no one dared fire. The party was heard retreating, but the dogs kept up the attack with tiger-like ferocity. Finally a redskin was heard giving vent to war whoops and fierce exclamations, followed by several shots from a revolver; but inside of a couple of minutes it had ended.

"Say, Fred," cried Nick, "as sure as you live, those dogs have killed a redskin."

"Yes, it sounds like it," returned Fred, "and I'm sure I don't care if they have. There were a couple of white men in that party, for I heard their voices."

"So did I," said Terry. "It won't do for us to strike a light, for it would make us targets for the others."

"Then call the dogs off," suggested Nick, and Fred called the two dogs in an undertone.

"Come here, Grip, come here, Grab," and the two dogs came running up to them.

"Let's get inside now and shut the gates," said Fred, "and the dogs will be sure to let us know if any enemies approach again."

They returned inside, fastened the gates and sat on the piazza to consult and listen. They soon became satisfied that the attack of the two dogs had entirely broken up the plans of the redskins, so they finally retired and slept till near sunrise. They were early risers, but one of the cowboys was up ahead of them.

"Say, boss," said he, "there's a dead Apache out there in the grass, about one hundred yards away from the barn. He looks as though the dogs tore him up."

"Just as I expected," said Fred; "let's go out and look at him, boys;" and he led the way out to the spot where they had heard the fierce fight the night before.

He was a brawny fellow, whom the dogs had dragged down and almost torn to pieces.

"It's pretty tough," said Fred; "but those fellows were slipping up on us for some evil purpose."

"There's no doubt of that," said Taylor, shaking his head. "The best investment you've made since buying the ranche was in purchasing those two dogs. I'd give a hundred dollars apiece for a pair like them."

"Well, what shall we do with this fellow, Nick?" Fred asked.

"Bury him, of course. What else can you do?"

They took up his gun, revolver and hunting knife, with his bullet pouch and powder horn, and had a hole dug, about four feet deep, close by, into which they tossed him and covered him up.

"Don't make any mound," said Nick. "Pack the earth down level with the ground and let the grass grow over it. You'll have to be extremely careful, for they're not the fellows to forget or forgive. That fellow Banks and several of his men were down at Ranchemen's Rest last Saturday, and was talking about a couple of kids from the East, who had bought a ranche up near him, and he said he guessed it would be fun watching the way they ran it."

"Well, maybe the fun has begun," said Terry. "If they burn us out, they'll have to strike us with lightning, for these dogs won't let them get near enough to start a fire."

"Well, be careful, keep on the defensive, and if any of them come about the place, treat them civilly, but with your hand on your revolver, ready for any emergency. I have to go back this morning. Sorry I can't stop longer with you."

"Well, come again," said Fred. "Whenever you think it's safe to leave the ranche, we'll run over to see you; but send along those cattle just as soon as you can. I think we are doing fine, but expect to do better."

Nick took leave of them and rode away, accompanied by Fred, who intended to go as far as the lower end of the ranche with him, which was within a mile of the river. There they parted and Fred struck around the circle, on his broncho, interviewing the boys on the watch and telling them what had happened up at the house the night before.

"We'll hear from them soon again, boss," remarked one of the cowboys.

"Yes, I expect to; but we must see to it that they hear from us, too."

"Yes, you bet," they laughed. One of the cow punchers

swore that he could kill a redskin a mile off with his Winchester, and was really anxious to get an excuse to try it.

After leaving the cowboys, Fred kept along the line of the ranche boundary, and when he had gone about a quarter of a mile, he noticed that some of the cattle seemed to be somewhat excited, and he wondered what could be the cause of it. He began an investigation, and in a little while discovered, in the edge of the timber, down near the corner of the boundary line, where there was a deep, rugged ravine, a party of seven redskins, who were hurriedly taking off the hide of a freshly killed cow. They were fully four hundred yards away from where he was. But he opened fire at once, as he sat in full view of them, on his horse. An Indian fell at his first shot. A second one was hit, and still a third one wounded, when the other four gathered up their rifles and began returning the fire. Not one of them had a Winchester. They were muzzle-loading rifles. He heard several bullets whistle close by him; but he sat there on his horse, pumping lead at them, and in less than two minutes from the first shot the four made a break for cover in the timber, leaving three lying near the carcass of the cow.

CHAPTER VI.

FRED AND TERRY ENTERTAIN PLEASANT VISITORS AT THE RANCHE.

On hearing the firing, the cowboys on the lower line of the ranche made a break in Fred's direction and three of them were soon with him.

"What is it, boss?" one of them asked.

"Seven redskins were skinning a cow down there," and he pointed his rifle in the direction indicated, "and I think I dropped three of them. The others, after returning my fire, made a break for cover, and they are in the timber somewhere. We'd better ride down there and see about it."

They rode down to the place and found that the cow had been lassoed in the bushes and her throat cut.

"They knew you would hear a shot," said Fred. "It was the smell of the blood that excited the cattle down this way, which aroused my suspicions. Hereafter one of you must take up a position up there on the hill, from which I fired upon them, so as to keep an eye on this particular spot."

There were two dead Indians and a wounded one lying near the carcass of the cow. The wounded redskin was very defiant, and threatened the vengeance of the tribe upon the entire ranche.

"Shut up, you old thief," said one of the cowboys, "or I'll take your scalp," and he grabbed a handful of hair and flourished his knife as though he was inclined to make his threat good.

"Let him alone," said Fred. "Take up the hide and the meat and carry it to the house. I guess those who were with him will come back to see after their dead and wounded. I don't intend to waste any sympathy on them myself."

They cut the carcass into four quarters, put them upon

their horses and rode away, leaving the wounded Indian where he had fallen. Two hours later, when Tom Wickley, the superintendent of the ranche, was making the circuit, he found both the dead and wounded gone.

"That shows the others were near by," said Fred, "and I am of the opinion that two of those were wounded also. I guess they will soon learn that this is a poor place to come for beef."

"Yes; but you may expect a visit from them in force," said Wicklow, shaking his head.

"Oh, yes; I'm looking for that, and when they come they will meet with a reception such as they have never dreamed of. They are sharp enough to understand, though, that if they attack a ranche government troops will be sent after them. What they will aim to do will be to provoke a fight and thus make it appear as though it was simply a personal matter; but under no circumstances must we permit more than two or three to enter the enclosure. If they appear in greater numbers, they must stay outside; for we don't know what treacherous trick they may plan to play on us. We must let them understand that we take no stock in them at all."

A week passed, and much to the surprise of the boys, nothing was heard from the Indians, nor the renegade whites; nor were any more cattle stolen or killed, that they could hear of. Of course, on a big ranche, like that, it was impossible to prevent some cattle from straying, and if any were stolen it was those which had strayed off into the timber which skirted the streams that ran through to the river.

A few days later Fred and Terry were standing on the piazza of the house, looking out over the broad expanse of prairie that rolled away from the foot of the hill in the direction of the river, when they saw in the distance three horses coming in a lope.

"Who in thunder can they be?" Terry asked.

"Tell me and I'll tell you," laughed Fred; "but I'll wager that one of them is a man and two are women."

"A man and two women, eh? Hanged if I don't believe you are right, Fred. It must be Nick and the two Gardner girls."

"No, they'd hardly come from that direction."

Fred went inside, got his field glass, adjusted the focus and gazed at the three strangers, who were yet a mile away.

"Great Scott! Terry, it's old man Griswold and his two daughters."

"Let me take a squint at them," said Terry, reaching out for the field glass, which Fred presented to him.

A sharp glance told him that Fred was right.

"Well, we've got to do the handsome thing by them," said Fred. "They are the first ladies who have visited us since we arrived here. They are pretty, clever girls, and the old man is a solid old rascal, whose word is as good as his bond."

"Why, yes, of course. We couldn't think of doing otherwise," and they went outside of the gate, took off their cowboy hats and waved them above their heads, while the trio were yet half a mile away.

As they rode up, Fred ran to Mattie, the elder of the two girls, while Terry hastened to assist the younger to alight.

"Bless me! what a ray of sunshine you are, Miss Mattie," said Fred, as he assisted the buxom lass to the ground. "You two are the first ladies who have visited our home since we came here."

"Well, father said he was coming over to see you, and we asked him to let us come with him," said the elder daughter, "and what a lovely place you have! You can't imagine how surprised we all were when we heard you had come back West and bought a ranche."

Just then the elder Griswold came up, having dismounted from his horse, and shook hands with the two boys.

"Come in, come in," said Fred. "Tom, look after the horses and see that they are fed;" and he led the way through the gate, round to the front of the house and stepped upon the piazza. There were chairs which were offered, water fresh from the well was drawn, and as soon as the girls had quenched their thirst they began roaming through the house, to see how the two boys were living. Exclamations of astonishment broke from them at least a dozen times, as they saw the beds, chairs, tables, bureaus and the pictures on the walls.

"Well, you two boys are well fixed," said the old man, who followed them from room to room. "You seem to have every comfort that one could desire."

"Oh, we lack a great many things yet," laughed Fred. "This is what we call just plain comfort, and it begins to seem like home to us."

"Why, it's the most comfortable home I ever saw!" exclaimed the elder of the two sisters.

"We are not through with fixing it up yet," said Terry. "We are going to have roses climbing all over the house. The yard will soon be filled with turkeys and chickens. We hope some day to have our mothers come out and spend a time with us. Here's a picture of my mother;" and he took up his mother's picture, which was standing on the bureau and showed it to them; "and here is Fred's mother. This is a picture of my sister Evelyn."

"Whose picture is this?" asked the elder daughter, taking up Mary Hamilton's picture and gazing at it.

"That's a picture of an intimate friend of my sister," said Terry.

"And a very good friend of yours, too, isn't she?" Nellie Griswold asked, with an inquiring look in her eyes.

"Of course; we've known each other all our lives, for we were both born within a rifle shot of each other's homes."

"She has a sweet face," remarked Mattie Griswold, "and I am sure I would like your sister, for there is something about her face that I like."

"She is one of the brightest girls on earth," remarked Fred, looking over her shoulder at the picture, which she was holding in her hands. "She is splendidly educated, can sing like a bird, dance like a fairy, tender-hearted as an angel and as sassy as a jaybird."

Mattie gazed at the picture for nearly a minute longer and then set it back on the bureau, while quite a change had come over her. Terry noticed it, but Fred appeared not to.

"Do you expect your mother and sister to come out here?" Mattie finally asked Terry.

"Well, not under a year yet. They'll be sure to, if we

don't go home before that time. They didn't dream that we were going to locate out here when we left home, and we haven't heard from them since we notified them about what we had done. The truth is, I wouldn't like to have them come out here until we had satisfied the cattle thieves along the river above us that they must let out cattle alone."

"I heard that you'd had some trouble with them," remarked Mr. Griswold.

"Yes, we wiped out two or three of them, and it would not surprise us to have them attack us in force at any time. That's the reason why we have not been able to run over and pay you a visit."

"Well, if they should come down in force on you, what would you do?"

"We'd try to kill every mother's son of them. We have ten hired men and have a Winchester rifle for each one. That makes one dozen in all; and when you understand that a good marksman with a Winchester is a match for ten redskins, you can rest assured that we don't feel at all uneasy. Now, come into our little kitchen. I want to show you something;" and Fred took Mattie familiarly by the arm, led the way into the little kitchen, which had been fitted up with an excellent cook stove, pantry and shelves.

It was really the first stove the two girls had ever seen, and the cowboy cook in charge was preparing the noonday meal. They examined the stove with a great deal of curiosity and asked many questions. They were both excellent cooks, as cooking went on the border, and naturally were quite eager to see what kind of a meal it could turn out. They both asked permission to assist in preparing the meal, that they might see how it was done. Terry had brought out a cook book with him, when he brought the stove; so they left the two girls in the kitchen with the cook, while they led the old man through the stables and shed, that he might see and inspect them.

"Where did you get those dogs?" Mr. Griswold asked.

"Sent East for them," replied Terry; "and we consider them worth their weight in gold to us out here. We've trained them well, and I believe they would tackle a grizzly. No stranger can approach within a hundred yards of the enclosure, day or night, without the alarm being given by them."

"It was extremely fortunate that you have such a strong picket fence around your house, barns and stables," remarked Griswold.

"Yes, indeed," assented Fred; "it's a regular stockade, and anyone who tries to scale it at night will be torn to pieces by the dogs. A hundred redskins on horseback couldn't ride it down. From a military standpoint we might call it a fort."

"Well, you're better protected than any ranche I know of in this part of the country."

"Yes; but our main defense is in our Winchesters. When we have time to do so we intend to enclose about fifty acres to put in corn and wheat, so as to raise all our supplies. We want other meat besides beef; hence we will raise pork."

"Do you think that would pay out here?" Griswold asked.

"Yes; all the ranchemen live on jerked beef, and what pork they get is salt junk, which costs twice as much as beef; and if we've got plenty of it on hand, for sale to other ranches, there's big money in it. Cattle and sheep can be raised on grass; but hogs must have something else, and I've been told that this land will make fifty bushels of corn to the acre."

"Do you know anything about farming?" Griswold asked.

"Practically, no; but we've seen farmers at work, have heard them talk, and have a pretty good theoretical knowledge of the business. Of course we're not afraid to work ourselves, and as we've got plenty of land we might as well make it produce whatever we want."

When they returned to the house they found the dinner nearly ready and the two sisters in an extremely lively mood over it. They were enthusiastic over the workings of the cooking stove. They spent an hour at the table, chatting merrily as they ate, and when they arose they found that it was raining. Of course they could not think of returning home in the rain, and as it continued for a couple of hours more, accompanied by considerable thunder and lightning, Fred suggested to Mr. Griswold that he abandon the idea of returning home that afternoon.

"Yes, father," exclaimed both the girls, "let us stay over till to-morrow morning. Mother will not be uneasy as long as you are with us."

The old man finally consented, and Fred assigned a room to the two daughters, telling them to take charge of the whole house and run it to suit themselves. They were as happy as little girls with their first dolls. Terry got out the cook book and found a recipe for making cake.

"Now, look here," said he. "I want to turn you two girls loose, to see what you can do. We've had no cake since we came out here, and I want you to make two big ones; one to take home with you to your mother. You've got everything that's necessary, and if you follow the directions I'm sure you could make a cake as sweet as yourselves."

"Oh, if you'll give us sugar enough, we'll make it a great deal sweeter than we are," laughed Nellie.

"I don't know about that," he replied. "Anything in petticoats way out here looks mighty sweet."

The two girls laughed, and asked if he and Fred intended to go on keeping "Bachelor's Hall."

"I don't know," he replied. "If you two come over here a few more times, you may run up against a minister, smuggled in for the purpose of hitching us up."

"It would be better for you to bring your minister over to our house," laughed Mattie, "for we couldn't think of marrying, unless mother was with us."

"Well, look here, now. Don't you go to giving me any such hints as that, or I might snap you up."

"We're not giving any hints," laughed Mattie.

"No," added Nellie, the younger; "but there's no harm in our taking hints."

Terry had a good deal of fun assisting the girls in making the cake, while Fred and Mr. Griswold talked over the cattle business out on the front piazza. The old man gave him a great deal of practical information and warned

him against buying cattle from anybody except ranche owners.

"Yes, I've been warned against that," remarked Fred. "I refused to buy from a man of the name of Banks, who lives a few miles up the river."

"Well, the less dealings you have with that man the better," said Mr. Griswold. "He is a dangerous, treacherous man, who has several times sought refuge among the Apaches to escape arrest for selling stolen cattle. He never goes about unless accompanied by several others, and sometimes with a party of a half dozen Apaches. Some three years ago I had trouble with him myself, and he was wounded by one of my cow punchers."

"Well, I had a pretty plain talk with him the other day," remarked Fred; "and in his presence I wounded three Apaches who had killed one of my cattle. I haven't seen him since then; but two of his men came here with Red Dog, who demanded a cow for each wounded Indian, as reparation."

"Surely you didn't let them have them?"

"On the contrary, I disarmed Red Dog and gave him a good thrashing;" and when he gave Mr. Griswold the details of the incident, the old ranchman laughed heartily.

They were sitting there on the piazza, talking, when Mattie Griswold ran out with a large fine cake, on a dish, which she triumphantly displayed as the handiwork of herself and sister.

"Great Scott!" laughed Fred, "where did you learn to make cake?"

"We followed the directions in the cook book, and Terry helped us; but I believe I had to do the most of the work, because he and Nellie were making love and sassing each other all the time."

"That's just like Terry," laughed Fred. "He can't sass a girl without making love to her, nor make love to her without sassing her. I'll bet ten dollars against the cake that he kissed her."

"Of course he did, and he got a slap for it each time."

"Well, I guess I'd better take a hand in that," and he arose, went into the kitchen, where Nellie was just taking another cake from the stove.

"Say, Terry, old man, Miss Mattie says you've been making love to the cook all the time."

"Well, they wouldn't let me have anything to do with making up the dough; so what else could I do?"

They laughed and chatted, set the cakes out to cool, and then Fred got out his violin and entertained them for nearly an hour with the best music he could draw out of it. The old ranchman and his two daughters were highly entertained and during the afternoon and evening listened to their stories of adventures on their trip around the world, and it was at a late hour they retired to sleep and dream.

CHAPTER VII.

TERRY OLCOTT AS A MATCH-MAKER.

The rain lasted through the greater part of the night; but the next morning the sun rose in a cloudless sky. But

for fear that the ravines and the river would be too full for passage, Griswold and his daughters remained at the ranche till high noon. Mattie and Nellie were loath to leave.

"You will come over to see us, will you not?" Mattie asked of Fred.

"Yes, just as soon as I think it is safe for us to do so. I have enjoyed nothing so much, since taking this ranche, as your present visit to us; and if you can persuade your father to pay us another visit, and will come with him, we'll try to entertain you even better than we have this time."

"I don't see how you could," said Nellie. "I never enjoyed a visit so much in my life; and if we do come again, I want to bring mother with us."

"Hitch up the wagon and bring the whole family," said Terry. "Put somebody in charge of the old home and come over and stay a week, and we'll whoop it up every day and evening during your stay."

They rode off, but returned a couple of hours later, with the report that the river was too high for them to ford it.

"Good, good!" exclaimed Fred. "I'm glad there is no bridge or boat;" and they spent another day and night there, feeling completely at home.

The next day the river was down low enough for them to ford it, and they started off the second time. They had scarcely crossed the river before they saw Nick Taylor and the two Gardner girls coming towards them.

"Hello!" exclaimed Nick, as he rode up and shook hands with Mr. Griswold and his two daughters, "have you been over to see the boys?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"Well, that's where we are going. Sorry we didn't have the pleasure of finding you there."

The girls greeted each other pleasantly; but it was very evident that Mattie and Nellie Griswold were by no means pleased at the visit of two such pretty, buxom lassies as Mary and Fanny Gardner, going over to Fearnot's ranche. After a few words more they rode on, and Nick and his two lively companions forded the river and dashed up to the ranche, taking Fred and Terry completely by surprise.

"A thousand welcomes," cried Fred, as he ran and assisted Mary out of the saddle, kissing her on both cheeks before she alighted upon her feet.

"You've become quite impudent," said Mary.

"Well, I don't mean to be," he laughed. "I didn't know it was impudent to kiss a girl's cheeks, instead of her lips; but I'm ready to make amends for it;" and before she was aware of his intention he caught her around the neck and kissed her on the mouth.

"That's a good example!" exclaimed Terry; and he and Fanny had a struggle, during which he kissed her all over her face.

Mary and Fred stood laughing at them.

"Well, did you get it finally?" Fred asked.

"You bet I did; got her on the nose, chin and right ear."

"Say!" exclaimed Fanny, "did you two kiss the Griswold girls that way?"

"No. We didn't dare try it. The old man was around all the time."

"Well, do you think Nick can't protect us?" Fanny asked.

"No. We can lick him easily," laughed Fred. "I never was so glad to see anybody in my life. Come in;" and he led the way into the enclosure and told the two girls to take possession of the house, and of course they did so.

Being practical housekeepers, they investigated the larder, and were astonished at the abundance of supplies they found there. They went all over the place, going into ecstasies over the little turkeys and chickens; they petted the two big dogs, inspected everything in the bedroom and bureau drawers, looked over the books, went through everything in the kitchen, and then Mary blurted out:

"Now, if you two were married, you'd have the happiest home in the world."

"Give us time," laughed Fred.

"How much time do you want?" she asked.

"Well, I want time enough to pay for the ranche, before I can think about getting married."

"How long will it take you to pay for it?"

"About five years, I guess."

"Oh, my! what a long time to wait!" she laughed.

"Well, you're not in a hurry, are you?" he asked.

"Yes; I'm afraid some other girl will get you before I can."

"Well, if I should happen to fall in love with you, there's no other girl in the world that could prevent me from stealing you. I wouldn't marry a girl unless I loved her."

"Oh, you're already in love," said Fanny; "and I know the girl; for her picture is on the bureau in your room."

"Which one is it?" Fred asked.

"Why, it's Terry's sister. It's the sweetest face I ever saw, and I can understand now why you and Terry are such great friends. You're in love with his sister."

"Well, if I am, I really don't know it," laughed Fred. "We are great friends, and I think she is one of the prettiest and sweetest girls that I ever met."

"But who is the other girl?" Mary asked. "There are two pictures on the bureau."

"She's a friend of my sister," said Terry.

"Yes, and a friend of your sister's brother, too, isn't she?"

"Yes, of course; and we count you two girls as our friends, too. Now, if you are anyway suspicious of Fred and I being in love, you ought to avail yourselves of the opportunity, while they are two thousand miles away, to cut them out."

"Oh, you want us to come courting, but we won't," laughed Fanny. "You know where we live, and if you want us you must come after us."

"Well, if they come and take both of you, somebody will get hurt," laughed Nick. "I'm willing for one of you to go; but not both."

"Why in thunder don't you let us know, then, which one we can have?" laughed Terry.

"That's the trouble," returned Nick. "I don't know which one I want. I may have to make them draw straws yet."

"Say, let's have a lottery," laughed Terry. "Let me

hold the straws for the girls to draw, and you agree to take the winning one."

"I'm willing," said Nick.

Terry looked at the two girls, who began to be a little serious.

"What do you say, girls? Will you draw the straws?"

They both laughed, blushed and hesitated for a few minutes, while he broke off a couple of straws, one two and the other three inches long.

"The longest straw gets Nick?" he said.

"Well, who does the short one get?" Fanny asked.

"Oh, she gets left."

Terry held his hand out to her, and she drew the short straw. He opened his hand and held the long straw out to Mary. She didn't take it, but stood there, changing color, and looking down at the floor of the piazza. Nick walked up to her, took her hand in his, slipped an arm around her waist and asked:

"Will you have me, Mary?"

"Yes, Nick," she replied, and he kissed her.

"By George!" exclaimed Terry, cutting a pigeon wing, "I've made a match."

"Nick!" exclaimed Fanny, "are you going to marry sister?"

"Yes."

Fanny threw her arms around Mary's neck and the two loving sisters hugged and kissed each other, and went inside the house, leaving the three boys out on the piazza.

"Terry, old man," said Nick, "I'm glad you put up that job on me. I would have been satisfied with either; but I'm glad that it's turned out as it has."

"She's just the girl for you, old man," said Fred. "She's a splendid housekeeper, used to ranche life and has an amiable disposition."

"Yes, they are both splendid girls," said Nick; "and let me tell you, Terry, that you couldn't do better than to go right inside and ask Fanny to have you."

"I don't believe she'd have me," said Terry.

"Yes, she would. She wouldn't hesitate a moment."

But Terry's loyalty to Mary Hamilton never wavered. He shook his head and remarked:

"I'll wait till I'm a few years older, Nick."

"You're old enough," said Nick. "Waiting till you grow a beard is all nonsense. You're amply able to take care of a wife, and she's able to take care of a husband, as a good wife should."

"That may be all very true; but I promised my mother more than a year ago not to go falling in love and marry before I was of age. Were I as old as you are, I'd probably be hitched up before this. I'll stand up with you, though, and see you through."

"I hardly think you are playing fair," laughed Taylor. "You've got me engaged and you're dodging around like a coyote, to keep from being caught yourself. I want it a double wedding, and have both the girls married at the same time."

"Now, look here, Nick," laughed Fred, "marriage is a lottery, they say, and Fanny had better wait and profit by Mary's experience. If it should prove a failure, we might be glad of it. If it's a success, so much the better all

round. She's something over two years younger than Mary, so if she waits a couple of years longer it will do her no harm. It would raise a great row at home if Terry should marry away out here, after making the solemn promise that he did to his mother; so don't urge him any further, but be satisfied with your own good luck; for good luck it is, for I think you've got one of the best girls in the West."

The two girls inside overheard every word that was said, and of course could but approve of Fred and Terry's course. The whole thing had come so unexpectedly, that they were considerably excited over it.

"Say, girls," called Fred, going into the main room and calling them out from the one in which they had sought refuge, "we want to celebrate this thing with a good dinner. We've got everything that is good to eat on the place, and a splendid stove to cook it in. So come ahead, now, and let's get up a royal feast. Stop your blushing, now, Mary. Laugh and be happy, and don't put on any airs."

The two sisters laughed heartily, joined in the spirit of the occasion, took possession of the kitchen, and proceeded to get up a grand feast, such as had never been seen on that ranche before.

Taylor seemed to be particularly happy over the engagement, while Terry created no little amusement by sticking his hat band full of feathers, gathered in the barnyard, which he said he was entitled to wear by reason of his exploits as a match-maker.

Just before they sat down to dinner, one of the cowboys notified Fred that a party of about a score of redskins was crossing the ranche between the house and the foot of the hills, a mile away. They were going eastward. Fred got his field glass and watched them for a couple of minutes in silence.

"There are three or four whites with them," he remarked; "but at that distance I can't tell whether or not I've ever seen them before."

"Oh, they're some of Banks's crowd, I guess," remarked Taylor.

"But where can they be going in that direction?" Terry asked.

"They may be going down to Ranchemen's Rest," replied Taylor, "as they frequently go there to trade at the store. They rarely buy anything, though, but ammunition and whisky."

Fred watched them until they had passed nearly out of sight, and then he turned his attention to his guests. They sat down to the dinner and enjoyed it to the fullest extent.

As Taylor and the two girls were to return by evening, they thought it best to make an early start, to avoid having to travel by starlight; so at about three o'clock in the afternoon they took leave of Fred and Terry and rode away.

"Terry, old man," laughed Fred, "you did Nick and Mary a good service."

"Yes, I think I did. I'm satisfied he liked Mary best, but at the same time would have been content had Fanny drawn him. He's a bashful sort of a fellow, and it might have gone on that way a year or two longer."

"I think so, too; and you can bet that old Gardner and his wife, when they hear the story of how it came about,

will shower all the blessings in the catalogue upon you; for it insures them a home in their old age, as well as makes Mary the mistress of one of the finest ranches in this part of the West. I couldn't help but laugh, though, how Nick crowded you, in urging you to take Fanny. I am sure the two girls heard it, as they sat inside."

"Yes, I was crowded," laughed Terry; "but there's only one girl in the world that I would marry, and she's in the East, not in the West."

"Ditto, old man," laughed Fred, giving him a hearty slap on the shoulder. "I knew all the time your heart was true to Mary; yet you have never told me whether or not you were really engaged to her."

"Well, I'm not, Fred. The truth is, that while I wouldn't be afraid to tackle Old Nick out in the middle of the road, with nothing but fire-brands, I've never been able to muster up courage enough to tell her I loved her, though I've done so many a time, in a bantering, round-about way, which, of course, doesn't satisfy any girl. I tried to several times; but hanged if my heart wouldn't get up in my throat and choke me. But I believe, though, she knows just how I feel."

"Of course she does. You can trust a girl for that, and you can rest satisfied that she feels the same way towards you."

"Do you really think so, Fred?"

"Yes; and so does Evelyn."

"Did you ever hear Evelyn say so?"

"Yes; for she hinted to me once that I should take you down to the barn, draw your shirt and give you nine and thirty lashes on the bare back, for not talking up to Mary as you should. I told her, though, that I wouldn't interfere in any other fellow's love affairs, as I wouldn't tolerate interference by anybody else in mine. And, by the way, old man, I guess by this time there are letters for us from home at the railroad station and in a day or two one of us must ride over after them."

"It's a pretty long ways to the postoffice, isn't it?"

"Yes; but we're living in a part of the world where miles don't count. Our nearest neighbors are Banks and his crowd, seven miles up the river, and they are neighbors whom we don't wish to associate with. Some of them passed down to-day, towards Ranchemen's Rest, and the probabilities are that they'll come back pretty well filled with tanglefoot whisky; and if they do they may stop and pay us a visit."

"I was thinking about that, Fred. They've got it in for us, and if they get hold of any whisky they'll make trouble."

"Yes, I think so; but we must see to it that they get all the trouble themselves; for we won't stand any nonsense from them. We've taken the stand that we intend to defend our cattle at all hazards."

While they were talking two of the cowboys were seen coming towards the house, more than a mile away, leading their bronchos, with a woman seated on each.

"Great Scott! Terry, just look at that, will you. The boys are bringing in two women, whom they must have run across on foot somewhere."

"Yes; that's strange, isn't it? I'm going to ride out and

meet them," and in less than a couple of minutes Fred had his horse saddled and was dashing over the prairies, in the direction of the party.

When he reached them he found an elderly woman and a young girl, about seventeen years of age.

"Boss," said one of the cowboys, "we found these ladies in the timber, near the river, having been two days and nights trying to make their escape from the Apaches. They are weak and hungry, and we told them they could find food, rest, shelter and protection on this ranche."

"You did right, Joe. Ladies, you are both welcome to our home, to remain just as long as you wish, with every man on the place at your service," and he rode alongside of the mother, grasped her hand and shook it warmly.

Then he asked:

"How did you happen to be in such a fix?"

She told him her story in a few simple words, to the effect that her husband had died, and that she and her daughter, attempting to make their way to the nearest settlement on horseback, had been captured by the Apaches and detained several weeks. They had been living on a small ranche, about one hundred miles above Fearnot's ranche, on the west side of the river.

CHAPTER VIII.

FRED AND TERRY HAVE A BATTLE ROYAL WITH APACHES AND RENEGADE WHITES.

Terry remained at the gate of the enclosure, waiting for the arrival of the two visitors whom Fred had gone to meet. As they rode up Fred dismounted, assisted the two ladies to the ground, and said to Terry:

"This is Mrs. Mason and her daughter, Terry. They have escaped from the Apaches, and of course we are to see that they are safely protected."

"Thunder! yes," exclaimed Terry, very much astonished at the information.

"Well, they are starving, and must have something to eat at once," remarked Fred, as he assisted Mrs. Mason through the gate and towards the house, followed by her daughter.

Terry rushed to the side of the latter, saying:

"Take my arm, Miss. Fortunately we have plenty to eat in the house, having enough left over from dinner to feed a dozen people."

They were led into the house, given seats, and a few minutes later food in the greatest abundance was set before them.

"Now, madam," said Fred, "both of you must be careful. Eat slowly and a little at a time, or you will both be very ill. We'll have some good hot tea for you inside of ten minutes."

"Oh, it is so hard to resist the temptation to eat, when one is so hungry," remarked Mrs. Mason.

"Yes, I know; but you must be prudent. Eat slowly and sip your tea, and no harm will come of it."

"Have you no women on the place?" Mrs. Mason asked.

"No; we are running a bachelor's ranche; but a neighbor and two ladies called and took dinner with us to-day. We can give you a good room, well furnished, where you can be comfortable and as private as in your own home."

"Do you mind if we go to the room now?" the daughter asked.

"No, certainly not; and your dinner can be taken there, too;" and the change was quickly made.

"Now," said Fred, as he and Terry were about to leave them alone in the room, "everything on the ranche is at your service. Don't hesitate to come and go as you wish. If anything is needed, ask for it. You both look as though you needed sleep."

"Yes," said Mrs. Mason, "we spent two days and nights in the timber, and we were afraid to sleep."

"Well, you have nothing in the world to fear here; so eat and sleep and you will not be disturbed. When you are ready to come out, do so;" and with that he left the room, closing the door after him.

"Fred," said Terry, "isn't it enough to make one want to kill every Apache he runs up against?"

"Yes; but it has been the same since the first settlement of white people on the American continent. The redskin is incapable of civilization. He chooses to remain a savage, and I suppose, so far as one's natural rights are concerned, no one has the right to deny him the privilege; but when he behaves like a savage, by killing, capturing, or maltreating defenseless whites, he should be wiped off the face of the earth."

Then they went to the two cowboys who had brought the mother and daughter in, and heard from them the story of how they were found down in the timber.

"They were very much frightened at first," said one of them, "thinking we were like the few renegade whites whom they saw among the Apaches, and it took us quite a while to convince them that they would be taken care of and protected at the ranche. They said they had been for three weeks in the hands of the Apaches, and that by the merest accident they saw an opportunity to slip away and make their escape through the timber, following the course of the river for many miles. What clothing they had along with them they left behind among the Indians."

After an hour or so the two cowboys returned to their station, at the lower end of the ranche, to assist in keeping the cattle together. It so happened that every cowboy on the place was out on duty, except one, who remained in charge of the stable, and who attended to milking the cows and preparing the meals. Both Fred and Terry were out in the sheds, inspecting one of the bronchos, which had been hurt, when a sudden barking of Grip and Grab warned them of the approach of strangers. They ran out and saw a party of three whites and four redskins riding up towards the entrance of the enclosure. They ran into the house, procured their Winchesters and took up a position near the gate, which was securely closed, and waited for them to come up. Two of the white men they instantly recognized as having seen before, and among the Indians was Red Dog, who had once paid them a visit, which they had never forgotten.

"Hello, neighbor!" called out one of the whites.

"Hello!" answered Fred; "which way are you bound?"

"We are bound for home, up the river. We thought we would stop and pay you a visit."

"Well, we are not receiving any visitors to-day."

"What's the matter with you?" the spokesman of the party asked.

"There is nothing the matter with us, only we don't receive people whom we don't know."

"Well, you've seen me before, haven't you?"

"Yes, you were here with Banks once, I believe."

"Yes. We live up the river a few miles above you, and you're the first rancheman we ever saw who closed his gate or the doors of his house against us."

"I close everything against white men who associate with redskins. We don't wish to have anything to do with them."

"What have you got against us?" the man asked.

"Nothing in the world except the company you keep."

"Well, these redskins are all right."

"Maybe they are; but we've shot several within the past month for stealing our cattle, and all redskins are alike to me, when I don't know them personally."

"They are all right, when they are treated right."

"Well, we've tried to treat them right, since we came here; but the only good Indian I ever saw was dead. You were an eye-witness to my wounding three of them, who were stealing one of my cows, and you assisted them back to the village. Hence I don't think you are any better than they are."

The three whites then began swearing and abusing everybody on the ranche, and threatening to break down the gate, come inside and clean out the place.

"It will be much cheaper for you to go away," suggested Fred.

"Oh, you come outside here," dared one of the whites.

"No, we're going to stay where we are, and the best thing you can do is to go away," Fred returned.

Red Dog and another one of the Indians then began a series of horrible threats. One of them fired his revolver at Grip, the big dog, who was standing in full view in the yard. The bullet struck the ground under the dog's feet, without injuring him. Fred instantly ordered the dog to get under the house, and the well-trained animal promptly obeyed. Then Fred ordered the cowboy in the stable to saddle his and Terry's bronchos, which was quickly done.

In the meantime the insolent threats of the renegade whites and redskins went on, until Fred became convinced that they were determined to have a fight. He and Terry stood it patiently for nearly a half hour, and then, unable longer to stand their insolence, they mounted their horses, charged through the open gate at full speed, firing at the villains with their Winchesters, and in a few moments three of them were down. The others turned to get out of their way, firing as they rode.

"Let them have it, Terry!" cried Fred. "Don't let one of them get away!"

Two of the white men were down, as were two Indians. The third renegade seemed to bear a charmed life, as he set spurs to his horse and dashed away at full speed, with Red Dog close at his heels. Fred and Terry followed them

nearly a mile, and then, by a lucky shot, Terry wounded the renegade's horse so severely that it came to a standstill. The villain dismounted and held up his hands, though his two pursuers were at least a quarter of a mile away. They dashed up to him and compelled him to throw his weapons away, consisting of a brace of revolvers and a big hunting knife.

"Now, march back to the house!" ordered Fred. "You've got to bury those fellows lying out there near the gate; that is if they are all dead. If they are not, I guess you had better finish them and then plant them. You came here hunting trouble, and I'm going to see that you get your fill of it."

"We were not hunting trouble," said the rascal. "We thought you treated us shabbily."

"Men like you are not entitled to respect from any white man," retorted Fred. "You are nothing but a lot of cattle thieves, and the sooner you are wiped out the better it will be for the peace of this part of the country."

"I never stole anything in my life," retorted the fellow. "The Apaches are pretty thick up above our place, and we've had to keep on good terms with them."

"Yes, I notice you are on very good terms with them; for in their presence you abused your own color, and threatened all sorts of terrible things, because you thought that seven of you were too many for a couple of boys; but we didn't think so."

When they reached the spot where the others had fallen they found the two Indians dead, one of the whites nearly so, and the other badly wounded. The wounded fellow was a cowardly bully; but now that he was down, with a bullet through him, he was as humble as a whipped spaniel.

"We didn't mean any harm," he said to Terry.

"Oh, that's all right," retorted Terry. "Some of you fellows may live long enough to learn a few things, while others of you won't. We are here to stay and raise cattle, and we won't stand any nonsense from either white or red Apaches."

"I'm no Apache," said the wounded man.

"No, I don't suppose you are. You're simply a low-down cattle thief, who has taken up with the redskins, in order to receive protection from them, when honest ranchmen get after you."

He protested that he was not a cattle thief; but the two boys denounced him roundly, and said that every ranche owner within fifty miles around had warned them of Jerry Banks and his gang, so they were ready for them and intended to wipe out every one who came upon the ranche and didn't behave as white men should.

By this time the news had reached the cowboys, who were on duty, watching the cattle, and half of them came in. Fred told them what had taken place, and ordered that picks and spades should be brought, and the dead buried where they lay.

One of the men started to the barn for the spade, when a party of a dozen redskins were seen approaching from the direction in which they were going early that morning.

"That's a part of your crowd, isn't it?" Fred asked of the renegade.

"Yes, they are our friends," was the reply.

"Well, we will go back to the house now, and leave you here to tell them what has happened, and what they may expect in the future, if they attempt any monkey business with us. If they want to bury those chaps they can do so, or take them away with them;" and with that they retired to the house, which was only one hundred and fifty yards away, and closed the gate, fastening it securely on the inside.

The redskins dashed up, and Fred and Terry easily recognized Red Dog among them. They were in a great rage when they saw the three dead and heard the story of the fight. There were thirteen of them, including the white man whom Fred and Terry had captured.

After a few minutes' consultation they made a charge at the gate, yelling and firing their revolvers. When within fifty yards of the enclosure seven Winchesters, whose muzzles protruded between the pickets of the fence, began blazing away; and at the first fire seven Indians tumbled out of their saddles. The others, appalled at the destructiveness of the fire, instantly threw themselves on the necks of their horses and rode away so that the bodies of their steeds concealed them from view.

"Let them have it, boys," cried Fred. "If you can't see a redskin, bring down his horse."

They continued to fire, wounding the horses, which their riders abandoned and sought refuge by throwing themselves down in the grass.

"Now mount, boys!" sang out Fred. "Let's dash out there and settle this business once for all. Wherever you see a redskin, slug him!"

They dashed out on their bronchos and scattered about in a circle for a quarter of a mile, hunting for the redskins, stalking about in the grass. Of course the cowboys were merciless, and as fast as they found them they despatched them, until within a half hour the only one of the entire party left alive was the captured renegade white.

"Well, what do you think of it?" Fred asked him.

"I think it bad business," was the reply.

"Yes; so it is; but extremely good business for us. The only thing I regret about it is that we have to plant such carcasses on the ranche. All good Indians are dead ones. We are going to let you go, in order to carry the news to your friends, and it doesn't make any difference to us whether you tell the truth or not. But if we have any more trouble from people up your way, we'll have a company of Federal cavalry here, to wipe out every redskin and white renegade along the river for over two hundred miles."

The renegade was glad enough to escape with his life, and lost no time in getting away from the locality. The cowboys buried the dead and secured their arms, which they took to the house, including the saddles and bridles on the bronchos. The wounded animals which gave no prospect of recovery were despatched and dragged a mile away, for the coyotes to devour, as soon as the stars came out.

That night the cowboys kept up a vigilant watch, depending upon the dogs to give the alarm on the approach of strangers; but everything passed off quietly, and the dogs never made a growl.

In the meantime, Mrs. Mason and her daughter, in the

house, were both sleeping the sleep of utter exhaustion, and neither had been awakened by the firing. So when they came out of their room the next morning, they were not only greatly refreshed, but in utter ignorance of what had taken place. They were not told of it, and when they had eaten a hearty breakfast they recovered their spirits, went out into the yard, and enjoyed the scene that met them there. There were turkeys and chickens in abundance, and the two milk cows in the shed supplied an abundance of milk and butter, to which they had long been strangers.

"I never thought there could be so much comfort in a home out here on the border," remarked Mrs. Mason.

"No," said Fred, "I don't know of another ranche where they take the trouble to have milk, butter and eggs. There are ranches with five thousand cattle on them, and yet no milk to drink nor butter to eat. People get into a rough way of living and make no effort to get out of it. Yet Terry and I think that we are having an extremely rough time of it."

"Well, it looks like a perfect paradise to me," remarked the daughter, who was really a very pretty girl.

"Well, you should see us later on," returned Fred. "We intend to have all the comforts and good things that can be raised here, and I hope that you and your mother will not think of leaving until you hear from your friends and have entirely recovered your strength and health."

"We don't wish to be a care upon your hands," remarked Mrs. Mason.

"That's all right. Take charge of things, keep the house for us and make the place look more like home. It's impossible to make a home without women in it. We have mothers and sisters out East, whom we love more than anything on earth, and we know what a good home is. You are safe here from the Indians, because we have a dozen Winchester rifles in the house, with a man to handle each one."

Mrs. Mason thanked the boys for their kindness, and said they would wait there until they could hear from their friends.

"That's right," said Terry; "and maybe you won't care to leave even after you hear from them."

"Oh, we couldn't think of staying here always, imposing upon your kindness. We left our home unprotected, and, of course, if we can sell it, we want to do so."

"Well, the best way to see it is to stay here and let it be known among the ranchemen that it is for sale. If you wish to write any letters we have plenty of pens, ink and paper, and to-morrow one of our boys will go to the railroad station and get our mail."

CHAPTER IX.

FRED BECOMES A TARGET FOR AN UNKNOWN MARKSMAN—
NICK TAYLOR'S WEDDING.

Mrs. Mason spent several hours that afternoon and evening writing letters to friends and relatives in the East. Of course Fred and Terry had letters to write also; but

they carefully refrained from making any mention of trouble with the redskins, as they did not wish to have their relatives at home become alarmed for their safety. But they gave glowing accounts of how they were enjoying ranche life and roughing it way out in Colorado. At daylight the next morning, one of the cow punchers left the ranche for the railroad station, and as soon as he was gone Fred and Terry, leaving the house in charge of Mrs. Mason and her daughter, whose name was Carrie, mounted their bronchos and circled around the ranche to see how things were going on.

They found everything just as they would have it. The cattle, having been carefully attended to, were rapidly increasing in numbers, and as the grass was rich and nutritious, they were in splendid condition.

"Terry," said Fred, "we might just as well have a thousand sheep on this ranche as none at all. There's plenty of room, there's big money in wool, and lamb chops are mighty good for a change of diet."

"Amen," laughed Terry. "What's the matter with having a few billy-goats, too? We could have no end of fun in getting up butting matches for amusement."

"All right," laughed Fred, "we'll have the goats, too."

Down at the lower end of the ranche Fred inquired of Tom Wicklow, the superintendent, whether or not he thought they could handle a few hundred sheep on the place also.

"Yes," was the reply. "They are really less trouble than cattle, in one way, and a little more in another. It is necessary at night to corral the sheep in an enclosure, to protect them from bears, wolves and coyotes; and sometimes, when the blizzards come, it's necessary to shelter them."

"Why, how's that?" Fred asked. "A sheep has his heavy coat of wool on in the winter, and ought to be able to stand the cold better than the cows."

"Yes; but sometimes a blizzard will come and wipe out a hundred cattle in a single night. Of course it's an expensive matter to provide shelter for several thousand head of cattle; but five sheep can be sheltered better than one cow."

"Well, I'm going to see if I can't provide some kind of a shelter for both. I've never spent a winter on a range; but I've read of thousands of cattle perishing in the cold, simply because no shelter had been provided for them. All that is needed is something to break off the north wind, with a shed projecting some twelve or fifteen feet on the south side of it."

"That's it," said Wicklow; "but it would be a big job to build it."

"Well, the timber will cost nothing but the labor of cutting it out, and portable saw mills can be had very reasonably. A man can lose money enough on a single night of a severe blizzard to pay the entire cost of it."

"I don't know of anything of that kind on any of the ranges," remarked Wicklow.

"Well, I'm going to figure on it, anyway; and if we find it feasible I'll tackle it."

The next day, when the cowboy returned from the railroad station with the mail, there were newspapers and letters in abundance, not only for Fred and Terry, but every-

one on the place, with the exception of Mrs. Mason and her daughter. There were three letters from Evelyn for Fred, besides several from his mother, and still more from friends. Terry's mail was equally as large. They spent the entire afternoon and evening reading them. In one of the papers Fred saw the advertisement of a manufacturer of all kinds of saw mills, and he at once opened correspondence with him about a portable engine and saw mill, to be shipped him; but in the meantime he kept up a vigorous watch on his ranche, and was gratified at the prospect before him.

A couple of weeks passed, and Fred and Terry came to the conclusion that Mrs. Mason and her daughter were absolutely necessary as housekeepers. They were both splendid cooks, and it relieved them of the necessity of keeping a man on the place for that purpose. They seemed to be satisfied with the new home they had dropped into, and were willing to follow Fred's advice about the disposition of their little ranche up the river.

He rode over to the Griswold ranche and asked him about it, and at the same time paid the promised visit which they had been so long expecting. He told them about Nick Taylor's engagement to Mary Gardner, and that he was looking every day for an invitation to come down and dance at the wedding.

"Of course I shall do so," he laughed, "and take my violin along."

The Griswold girls were very much interested in the news that Mrs. Mason and her daughter were stopping at his ranche, and keeping house for him and Terry.

"Are they good housekeepers?" Mattie asked.

"Splendid," he replied. "You and Nellie must come over and see them. Stay a week, for I think you would enjoy the change."

"We'll be receiving an invitation soon to come over there to a wedding, won't we?" she asked.

"No, I guess not. Terry and I are going to grow beards some time before we commit matrimony. Next season we intend to have our mothers out here, if we can persuade them to come; and if we do, we'll have a dance every Saturday night, through the whole summer."

He left the Griswold ranche and rode over to the Taylor place to see Nick.

"Glad to see you, old man," said Nick. "I was going to send over to your place to-morrow, notifying you and Terry to come over next Saturday and bring your violin, for we're going to have a big dance at our wedding."

"Good, good! So you and Mary have arranged it, have you?"

"Oh, yes; I left it with them, and they've fixed it up to suit themselves."

"That's right. They are good managers, and you can safely leave such matters to them."

He found the old parents of Mary and Fanny very happy over the approaching marriage. Then he astonished them by telling the story of the rescue of the Widow Mason and her daughter, and of the fight with the redskins and renegade whites.

"Great Scott! Fred, bring them over with you," said Nick.

"I don't believe they can come, Taylor, as they haven't a rag of clothing except what they have on their backs. I've ordered some clothes for them, but they won't get them in time to make them up to be at your wedding."

"Oh, that's too bad," said Fanny, who was a tender-hearted girl. "If I had time I would go over there to-morrow and take some of my dresses, to see if they can wear them."

"I think the daughter is just about your size," remarked Frank; "but under the circumstances I think they would prefer to stay at home, and I guess Nick and Mary had better take a little wedding trip on horseback and stop with us a few days."

"That's just what we were going to do," laughed Nick; "for Terry made the match for us at your house, and we think it would be just the thing to run over there for a few days. Do you expect any more trouble with the Indians?"

"No, I do not. I think they regard the ranche, now, as a plague spot and have made up their minds to keep away from it. I don't believe that there are any more white renegade left but Banks and the fellow we let go, and we've heard nothing from either of them since."

Fred soon took leave of Nick and the Gardners; for he would have to ride fast to reach home before dark. He had a good horse, however, whose long, sweeping strides took him to the river just about sunset. As he was fording the stream he heard the crack of a rifle in the timber on his right, at least an eighth of a mile away, and the bullet whistled within a foot of his head.

"I wonder if that was intended for me," he muttered. "It was a pretty good shot for that distance."

Half a minute later another bullet whistled by him. He looked in vain for powder smoke in the direction indicated by the sound, and knew that the marksman was well concealed somewhere in the timber. Before he reached the opposite bank of the stream a third bullet whistled by him.

"Well, if I had any idea as to where he is located, I'd go gunning for him," he said, "but night is coming on, and not knowing exactly where he is, I would simply be setting myself up as a target, to be riddled."

He dashed on up towards home, and when he struck the watch on the lower side of the ranche he told them that some one had fired at him three times, as he was crossing the stream.

"The shots came from below," he said; "and if two or three of you will creep down through the timber, in that direction, you may be able to find him. If it's a white man catch him and bring him up to the house. If it's a red-skin, kill him and throw him into the river."

"All right, boss," said one of the cowboys; and Fred rode on, reaching the house just before the stars came out.

He was astonished at seeing a stranger on the piazza, talking with Terry, who introduced him as a Mr. Cromley. Fred shook hands with him and welcomed him to the ranche.

"Say, Fred," said Terry, "the station agent sent out the dry goods you ordered for Mrs. Mason. Mr. Cromley was coming through and he brought them."

"Great Scott! what luck!" laughed Fred. "I have an invitation for both the ladies to be at Nick Taylor's wedding."

on Saturday night, and I was afraid they would not be able to attend, on account of not getting those goods in time."

"Oh, they are going to hitch next Saturday, eh?"

"Yes; and it's to be a big blowout. They expect nearly a hundred people present, and the feast is to consist of a big barbaeue."

Of course the mother and daughter were not a little surprised over the news, to say nothing of the prospect of a change of clothing. Fred had sent a generous order and they had everything that was needed; even the shoes and slippers.

That evening Mr. Cromley acquainted the boys with the fact that he was traveling from ranche to ranche, making contracts for cattle in the fall. He was well known to the station agent, Griswold and Nick Taylor.

"Oh, yes," said Fred; "I heard Griswold speak of you only yesterday, remarking that it was near about time for you to put in your regular appearance. You're in time to be at Nick's wedding."

Cromley spent the next day at Fearnot's ranche, inspecting the cattle, and finally bargained to take five hundred of them in the fall, at whatever the market price was at the time. On the following morning he drove over to the Griswold ranche, where he expected to secure between one and two thousand heads of cattle, after which he would drive on to Taylor's place.

In the meantime Mrs. Mason and her daughter were working day and night, making a new dress for each other to wear at Taylor's wedding. Suddenly the thought occurred to Fred to inquire of the cowboys if they had succeeded in finding the man who had shot at him, when he was crossing the river on his return from Nick Taylor's ranche. He had forgotten all about it, on account of Cromley's arrival, and the dry goods for Mrs. Mason.

"Oh, yes," laughed one of the cowboys, "we found him."

"The deuce you did! Where was he?"

"We caught him ereeping through the timber, making his way up the river. He was armed with a Winchester and was alone."

"Was he a white man?"

"Yes; one of the Banks crowd."

"What did you do with him?"

Joe tried to evade the question by simply remarking:

"We gave his rifle to Wicklow, and he's got it yet."

Fred understood what that meant, and he knew that he'd never be shot at again by that renegade. He didn't care to ask any more questions about it; for he saw that the cowboys didn't wish to make any admissions as to what they had really done. He told Terry about it, and the latter chuckled, saying:

"I guess there are not many of that gang left now. They would clean us out if they could; but they've made up their minds that they can't. They know that it is impossible to creep up on us in the night, because the dogs are too watchful. They can't even get near enough to poison them; and they know that if they make an attack upon the ranche the Government troops will be called out and there'll be the Old Harry to pay. I was talking with Wicklow about it yesterday, and he expressed his astonishment at the effect

of the very unceremonious manner in which we have dealt with them."

Early on Saturday morning Fred and Terry had one of the light wagons hitched up, and accompanied by Mrs. Mason and her daughter, started for Taylor's ranche. They reached there a little after noon, and found ranchemen and their families coming in from various directions, while a great barbaeue was going on down below the barn. The widow and her daughter received a cordial welcome from every one, and, with the exception of the bride, they were the neatest dressed of all the women and girls present. A justice of the peace was on hand to officiate, and after the knot was tied the feasting and dancing began, lasting far into the night.

Joe Griswold, brother of Mattie and Nellie, was very much smitten with Carrie Mason, and he paid her a great deal of attention. As for Fred and Terry, they danced with over a dozen different girls, and yet found time to play the violin, in their turn, for other dancers. It was a great blowout, and there were nearly one hundred people in attendance, at least thirty of whom were of the gentler sex. Of course Fred's party remained all night at the Taylor ranche, and the next day started out on their return, accompanied by Joe Griswold and his sister, Mattie, who had been invited to spend a week at the Fearnot ranche. Mattie rode in the wagon with Mrs. Mason and Carrie, while Joe rode his broncho. It was a merry party all the way back, and several times Terry attempted to tease Carrie about the mash she had made on young Griswold, and much to his surprise Mattie assisted him by saying that it was the first time in her life that she had ever seen her brother interested in any girl. The truth is, she was anxious to have Carrie removed from her path as a rival; for she was deeply in love with Fred, and was apprehensive that the pretty Mason girl, being in the house with him all the time, might succeed in capturing him. Hence her prompt acceptance of Fred's invitation to her and her brother to return home with them.

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION.

They reached home in the middle of the afternoon, and Mattie's enthusiasm over the turkeys and chickens was extremely refreshing to both Fred and Terry. They had never seen her so vivacious before, and of course they were pleased with the change that had come over her. She seemed, however, to take a real liking to Carrie Mason, who was a sweet, amiable girl, with a good fund of hard, practical common sense.

It was a merry party at Fred Fearnot's ranche during the week following Nick Taylor's marriage; but Fred had an understanding with Terry that he and Joe must entertain the girls, leaving him time to look after the ranche. He greatly feared that if he paid Mattie Griswold any particular attentions himself, his actions might be misconstrued. Of course Terry promptly agreed to do all the honors of the host, while Fred instructed Wicklow to

make such reports in the presence of the girls as would keep him out all day long watching and assisting in rounding up the cattle.

Twice during the week Terry and Joe, accompanied by the two girls, made the circle of the ranche on horseback, and each time found Fred very busy with the cowboys. In the evening he played the violin for the others to dance. He was kind and polite to the girls and was more like a brother than otherwise.

As for Joe Griswold, his fancy for Carrie Mason grew to a wild infatuation. At first she was inclined to be a little shy of him; but inside of three days she began yielding and before the week was out they were engaged. Mattie seemed to be very much pleased over it, and remarked laughingly:

"I wonder if my time will ever come."

"Of course it will," said Fred. "Girls like you never have to wait very long for offers."

"I don't know," she laughed. "I'm beginning to feel old."

"Why, you're only eighteen years old; almost too young to marry yet."

"Why, look at Carrie; she isn't that old," she replied.

"Very true; she's marrying very young; but look at Mary Gardner. She's past twenty. Don't be in a hurry, for fear that you might make a mistake and get hold of the wrong fellow. Wait until your own heart tells you when the right man comes along."

"How is it that you haven't fallen in love?" she asked.

"How do you know but what I have; but like Terry, I am waiting to grow a beard? I'm under promise to my mother not to marry until I'm several years older than I am now."

While they were talking Nick and his bride rode up to pay them a visit, and, of course, they were received with a glad shout of welcome. Fred and Terry ran out, assisted Mary from the saddle, and both hugged and kissed her, as though she were a dear sister. They saw that she was as happy as the days were long.

"Come in, come in!" laughed Fred. "We've been expecting you, and we've got the bridal chamber fixed up for you;" and he led the way into the house, which now had about as many occupants as could comfortably be accommodated.

"Well, old man, are you satisfied with your bargain?" Fred asked Nick.

"You bet I am," he laughed. "I never felt so grateful in my life as I do to Terry for bringing about the match."

"I believe this is a lucky house," laughed Fred; "for a second match has already been arranged between Joe and Carrie."

"Oh, my!" exclaimed Mary, rushing at Carrie Mason, catching her in her arms and kissing her all over the face, "you are fortunate. He's a good man. I've known him a long time, and I am sure you will be very happy with him."

Then she went to Terry, when she had the opportunity to do so, and told him almost in so many words that she wanted him for a brother-in-law, and that her sister, Fanny, was just the girl for him.

"Now, look here, old girl," said Terry, "don't hint to any one else, please. I'm under a solemn pledge to my mother not to marry before I become of age, and that's nearly three years off yet; and Fred is under a similar promise to his mother. Be satisfied with your own match and don't try to make any for Fred and I."

Mary seemed to be considerably disappointed; but she was a prudent young woman, and at once proceeded to follow his advice. Two days later Nick and his bride left to return home, and were accompanied by Joe Griswold. Mattie remained at the ranche, as she had come in Fred's wagon the next day after the wedding, and hence had no horse on which to return home. Joe was to come back a week later, bringing a horse with him. The day after they left, Cromley, the cattle buyer, drove up, having visited several ranches below and made contracts for thousands of heads of cattle.

"Glad to see you back, Mr. Cromley," said Fred. "What luck have you had?"

"Better than usual," he replied. "I've contracted for nearly ten thousand head of cattle, and have received options on nearly half as many more. Altogether I'm very well satisfied with my trip."

"Glad to hear it," returned Fred. "You'd better stop with us a few days for a rest, before returning to the railroad station."

That evening out on the piazza of the house, Cromley informed Fred that a great fever of land speculation had broken out in Denver, and that fortunes were being made in buying and selling land all over the section of country in which his and Taylor's ranches lay.

"Some of them have bought very cheap," he said, "because neither seller nor buyer had ever seen the land and knew nothing about the lay of it. The whole section is marked off in squares, on huge maps, and people buy and sell with no other guide. One man bought a ranche at a ridiculously low price, neither he nor the seller having ever seen it. The next day a man who had been all over it told him that he had bought a fortune for a song, and he held on to it until its value became known and then sold it, making some fifteen or twenty thousand dollars out of it."

"Well, look here, Mr. Cromley," said Fred; "as soon as you return to Denver, send me one or two of those maps. I'd like to locate my own ranche on it and get the number of the sections of land to the east, west and south of me; for I may want to buy them."

"All right," said Cromley, "I will."

Two days later he left Fred's ranche, and, true to his promise, sent back from Denver a couple of large maps, with every section of land, for hundreds of miles around him, neatly marked off in square sections and numbered. Fred and Terry studied it patiently, located the ranche on it and the number of square sections that made it up. Fred made memoranda of the sections and their numbers to the right, left and south of him, where the land lay beautifully and was well watered, and in several cases well timbered. Then they marked off several other sections farther down the river, between them and Ranchemen's Rest.

"Terry," said Fred, when they had studied the map for a couple of days, "we know every foot of this land for

miles around us. It is possible that we might run down to Denver and watch a chance to pick up some of these sections around us, and make a pile of money out of it."

"Yes," said Terry, "we have got some bank drafts with us that we haven't used yet. We might be able to pay for the ranche in a few weeks instead of the five years that Nick has given us."

"Yes, I was thinking about that. I guess we'd better take a run down there and keep our ears and eyes open for a while, for bargains."

"But whom can you leave in charge?" Terry asked.

"Wicklows, of course."

Terry shook his head and looked dubious.

"Oh, I know he was a failure when he was running it for Nick," remarked Fred; "but he's learned a few things since we took hold. He and every man on the place know what my rules are and just what I would do under certain circumstances. Besides, we are not to be gone very long, and there's nothing to do at present, except to keep a strict watch on the cattle; for I'm satisfied the redskins and white renegades will never trouble us again."

"All right," said Terry. "I'm willing to risk it, if you are."

"I'm willing," laughed Fred. "I want to pick up land enough around here for forty or fifty thousand head of cattle, and if I can get it cheap enough, I'll soon have the largest and finest ranche in Colorado."

That evening Fred informed Mrs. Mason and her daughter that he and Terry were going to Denver on business, and that Wicklow, the superintendent of the ranche, would have charge during his absence; that she and Carrie were to be in supreme control of the house and run it as if it was their own, and enjoy themselves.

"How long will you be gone?" Mrs. Mason asked.

"One, two, three, or four weeks," he replied. "Our stay will depend entirely upon how the business we are called away on develops. We will return just as soon as we possibly can. In the meantime you can send one of the men weekly for mail, to the railroad station."

The next day they mounted their horses and rode off, accompanied by one of the cowboys, who was to bring their horses back to the ranche. They did not let any of the cow punchers know the nature of the business that was calling them to Denver. They had given implicit instructions, though, as to how things should be run in their absence, and had no fears that anything would go wrong.

When they were about five miles above the upper line of the ranche they came across the head and hoofs of a cow that had just been killed.

"Say, Terry," said Fred, "that's the work of cattle thieves."

"No, I think not," said Terry. "It seems to be the work of meat thieves, who wanted the meat to eat, instead of for sale."

"Yes; of course. It amounts to the same thing. But do you note the significance of it?"

"Can't say that I do. What is it?"

"Why, they've stopped that sort of business down our way."

"Yes, yes; that's so," laughed Terry. "It wouldn't be

a bad idea to ride to the house of the owner of this ranche and give him a pointer."

"Well, it would only be a mile out of the way, so I believe I'll do it;" so they rode up to the ranchman's house, told him what they had discovered at the lower end of his range.

"Yes," said the ranchman, "they get a cow once or twice a week, and I've made up my mind to put it down to profit and loss, for I don't well see how it can be prevented."

"How many men have you got on your place?"

"Fourteen in all."

"Very well. Buy fourteen Winchesters. Have every man carry one strapped over his back, and whenever they can get on to cattle thieves, white or black, let them open fire and wipe them out. That's the way I broke it up on my ranche, and we haven't lost a single cow inside of six weeks."

"I guess you run them over on to me," said the ranchman.

"I think so myself," assented Fred; and now it's your time to run them over on to some other ranche. Let them understand that you will protect your property at all hazards, and they'll soon give you a wide berth."

The two boys rode on, and in the middle of the afternoon reached the railroad station, where they left their horses in charge of the cowboy and took the train for Denver.

THE END.

Read "FRED FEARNOT'S SPECULATION; OR, OUTWITTING THE LAND SHARKS," which will be the next number (44) of "Work and Win."

MY PATENTS.

No. 7.

By "Skettery."

An iron is an article in use in every well-regulated family. It is used to smooth and polish off clothes, and also, in cases of domestic trouble, as a weapon of offense.

A husband who gets a nice flat-iron square in the jaw ain't apt to proceed with remarks calculated to offend his wife.

I had made a study of irons.

The ordinary iron never gets heated when it is wanted, it never stays heated long enough, generally has a hump-backed handle, and possesses a remarkable faculty of falling upon your toes.

I know all about irons, because, as I have confessed, my mother takes in washing.

She does not do it for fun, but for money, although my folks are all wealthy, but they have not served out their terms yet.

Mother has had a good deal of trouble about her irons, so I resolved to invent a patent one.

I worked over the idea for quite a while.

Finally I believed that my efforts were crowned with success.

I made a model of my iron and took it to my patent broker.

He greeted me genially, for he had by this time grown to expect me just as regularly as the tax-collector.

"Hello, Skettery!" said he; "round again? What is the snap now? Got a threshing-machine, or a water-wheel, or a derrick?"

"No," I replied, "it is a domestic article?"

"Well, what is it?"

"An iron. Here is the model. Did you ever see one like it before?"

"Thank Heavens, no!"

"Think I'll get a patent on it?"

"Lord! they'll give you two to get it out of the office."

My iron was built upon the principle of a locomotive. Indeed, it looked like a half-shell one. It had the handle upon the stern, and there was a sort of a boiler in it, in which you placed the fuel. It got hot itself; a stove was of no use to it.

My mother was pleased with it.

She watched me with the greatest interest as I explained the workings of it to her.

"I hope, old gal," I said (I am always very respectful to my mother, it is the motto of my career), "that this iron will be the triumph of my life. If it only succeeds, we can wear ear-muffs and eat strawberries all winter. Why, I positively believe that if I sell a million a year we may be actually able to ride around Central Park in a hack once a year."

She wiped her eyes.

"Don't—don't be so sanguine," said she; "as for my part, if we can only hire the Fifth Avenue Hotel for a winter residence, and have a steam yacht or so, I will be content."

"We will see, aged skeleton," returned I. "Where is your wash?"

She laid a shirt, one of those nice ruffled shirts for night use, with a pistol pocket in it, upon the table.

"Would you like to try it first?" I asked.

"You can bet your sweet intestines," she answered. (Although mother has had many vicissitudes since father fell in the war, killed trying to eat an army biscuit, she never forgets, in her speech, that she was born a perfect lady.)

"Is it all hunkey?" continued she.

"Yes."

She picked it up.

She only held it about one-sixteenth of a second. Then it fell to the floor with a crash, and mother began to dance up and down in a style very unbecoming to a lady of her age.

"Whoo! whow! blazes!" cried she, dancing about as if she was hung on wires; "blame—confound!"

"What?"

"The iron."

"What ails it?"

"Feel it."

I did so.

Its handle was almost, no lying, red hot.

I stifled my pain as much as I could, and with tears in my eyes tried to carelessly remark:

"It is a little hot."

"Hot!" repeated my maternal parent, who was trying—she had partially subsided—to ease the stings of the burns by bathing her hands in bluing water. "Oh, no. It ain't hot, it's cold, cold as the grave. It's a real nice iron, to fill up hospitals."

I picked up my patent iron with it, and found that it worked all right. The heat did not bother my hand at all.

"Now, old skinamarig," I fondly lisped to my mother, "we'll settle the shirt. See how nicely I will iron it!"

I tried to.

"You fool!—knave!—no good!" cried she; "you have burnt a big hole in that shirt. I have got a good mind to hit you a creaser over the jaw."

"Easy, easy," said I. "I've got a little too much pressure on, that is all. Throw that shirt into the fire, and swear that you never saw it. Now, I'll show you how my patent works."

Shirts were scarce, but the old lady had a petticoat, and she placed it at my mercy. I do believe, poor soul, that she did have a lingering feeling of fondness for that iron, and believed that it might prove the corner-stone of our fortunes.

As the iron ran over it there was no smell of seorch.

I was elated.

"Did not I tell you?" exclaimed I. "I knew that at last——"

My mother interrupted me by a shrill shriek.

"You've ruined me!" yelled she.

"Ruined you?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"Look at that petticoat."

I looked.

Wherever my iron had passed over the surface of the petticoat there was a black smirch.

"Just look at these," wailed mother; "ruined, dead, knocked out. Even a female scarecrow would not be seen in a corn-field with it on. And it belongs to Mrs. De Courey, one of my best patronesses. It formed part of her wedding outfit, and I know she values it at ten dollars. She will never—not even occasionally—even let me gargle her clothes again. That distressed heathen Chi-lee across the way will get them all."

I attempted to console her.

"Don't mind about a petticoat, mother," I said. "The receipts from the sale of my irons will, within a week, buy a dozen crates full of petticoats. My iron will make me as rich as Singer, of sewing-machine fame, as Cyrus W. Field, as Vanderbilt, as Jay Gould, as Rowell, as——"

Here, to emphasize my remarks, I struck the iron with a good deal of unnecessary force upon the table in front of me.

There was a preliminary fizz!

Then:

Sizz!

Whang!

Bang!

Mother fell backward into a wash-tub, I turned a somersault over the table, while the air was filled with smoke and flying pieces of metal. My iron had bursted.

Also my patent.

From Fred Fearnot's Friends!

Minneapolis, Minn., August 10, 1899.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—I have read "Work and Win" from No. 1 until the present date and find it a very interesting weekly. As for Fred and Terry, I think they are the bravest boys I ever heard of and are perfectly capable of taking care of themselves. I would like to spend a term at Avon with boys like Fred and Terry. Evelyn is the bravest and sweetest girl that ever was, and she thinks a great deal of Fred. It was very brave in her to help Fred out by throwing sand in the farmers' eyes. I wish "Work and Win" a long life. I remain a constant reader, Willie J. Martin, 216 South 2d st.

Thanks for flattering opinions, Willie. We are glad you like Fred. All boys ought to like him and follow his example. We wish you a long life, also.

New York, August 11, 1899.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—Inclosed find three two-cent stamps and a coupon, for which please send me a Fearnot-Dewey medal, as I would like to have these two heroes as near to my heart as possible. I am one of the most ardent admirers of Fred, Terry, Evelyn and the rest of the party. Many long years to Mr. Hal Standish. I hope that "Work and Win" will be published a great many years. It is the only weekly for young America and it is perfectly pure. I remain your constant reader, Joe Einstein, 1152 2d ave.

Thanks, Joe. "The only weekly for young America" is high praise. We trust that you were pleased with your medal and that you may wear it and read your favorite weekly for many years.

Merced, Cal., August 10, 1899.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—I take pleasure in writing and telling you what I think of your "Work and Win" series. I think they are winners from the word go. I like them better than any others I have ever read. I have read from No. 1 to No. 35 and shall continue to do so as long as they are published. Yours truly, George Bacigalupi.

P. S.—Inclosed find stamps and coupon for a Dewey medal.

Strong words, George, but we hope to deserve them. We hope that you were pleased with your medal and will continue to be a reader of "Work and Win."

McKeesport, Pa.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—Inclosed you will find three stamps for a medal. I am a reader of "Work and Win" and think it the best novel published. No. 34 was a fine one. Give my best respects to all. George W. Mason.

They all think it the best, George, so you must be right. We trust that you liked your medal.

Allentown, Pa.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—Inclosed find three two-cent stamps, for which please send me one of your Dewey medals. I have read "Work and Win" from No. 1 to the latest out and think Fred is a nice young man. Terry is just like him. He deserves such a sister as Evelyn. I am a small boy ten years old. I wish to follow Fred's example. I wish success to "Work and Win." Robert F. Jackson, 122 Ohio st.

You are all right, Robert, if your writing is not of the best, although it is excellent for a boy of ten. Thanks for your wishes. We hope you liked your medal.

Wilkesbarre, Pa., August 10, 1899.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—I have read fifteen books of "Work and Win" and I find that they are all right. I have read lots of other books, but they are not in it with "Work and Win." I intend to read "Work and Win" right along. Having read so many books I would like to have a medal, so you will find four two-cent stamps in this letter. Yours truly, Elmer Neuer, 188 Lincoln st.

"The others are not in it with "Work and Win" is the highest kind of praise. Thanks for good wishes. We hope you were pleased with the medal.

Toronto, Canada, August 10, 1899.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—I have been a reader of your Fred Fearnot weekly ever since it was published. I consider it the best weekly that was ever published for boys. Fred and Evelyn are two of the best characters I ever saw. I would like to see Fred and Terry organize a football club, of which Fred would be the captain. I herewith enclose three two-cent stamps and a coupon for one of the Dewey medals. Yours sincerely, Bert Joslin.

Thanks for your strong recommendation, Bert. We certainly try to make it the best. You may hear of Fred at the head of a football team some day. We hope that you were pleased with your medal.

Philadelphia, Pa., August 10, 1899.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—I have read many of the "Work and Win" stories and think that they are excellent in their information and the reading matter they give one. We have a good many young friends here that take pleasure in reading your books. I think they are perfectly fine. James D. Bradley.

There is nothing out of the way in "Work and Win," and we are glad that you like and can recommend it. The more that is known about it, the more readers we have.

Detroit, Mich., August 10, 1899.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—I am a constant reader of "Work and Win" and I can't say enough good things about it. I think Fred Fearnot is a good boy for Evelyn and I hope, before you stop publishing "Work and Win," that Fred will marry her, and I hope that Terry will marry Flossie Graves, because she is a good girl. I think Frank Gale has a jealous disposition and Nellie ought not try his patience the way she does. Constant Reader.

The good things that you do say about "Work and Win" satisfy us. Fred has plenty of time to get married and so has Terry. We hope you will remain constant to Fred.

Hamilton, Ont., Can., Aug. 12, 1899.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—I have read "Work and Win" from No. 1 to the latest and was particularly interested with No. 30. I agree with Mat Drysal, of Perth, Ont., and W. P. T., of Hamilton, Ont., in wishing that Fred, Terry and Evelyn would visit Canada, where I hope they will have lots of pleasant adventure. Please find inclosed six cents for medal. Wishing Mr. Hal Standish, Fred, Terry and Evelyn good luck, yours, Frank Cowing, 280 John st., N.

We hope that you liked your medal, Frank. You may hear of Fred in Canada some day. He has been all over the world. Thanks for kind wishes.

New York, August 12, 1899.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—I have at last formed the club that I wrote you about, and it is named "The Fred Fearnot Work and Win Club." Last night we elected officers for it. The first motion that was made, that we name it the Fred Fearnot Work and Win Club, was carried by 10 to 0. The next was that we have four Fearnots a week. It was carried by 6 to 2. Two did not want to vote and the other two that were against wanted to have two every week instead of four. Then we made one more motion, which was carried, that we all get badges. We have a club room at 443 East 52d st. All the fellows would like to see Fred as a sailor on Dewey's ship or a soldier in the late war. Fred is a good fellow and is as plucky a boy as I ever heard about. I have read from No. 1 up to No. 35, and I am just reading No. 36 now. My motto is "Work and Win." It is also the club's at present. I was elected president, and I made up the name and it is going to stay. Terry is a good fellow and only for him in No. 35 Fred might have got his head broken or hurt somewhere. Evelyn is all right. I guess you wonder why it is that I am using this paper. It is because I work in this law office as office boy. I am fifteen years old and my father says that the books are all right. At first he thought that they were no good, but after a while I got him to read Sweetcake and he said it was all right. Do me the favor to hit Adolphus Sweetcake with a bwick in the jaw for his Greek. I do not forget how he got stuck on the lemons he bought. Yours truly, Edward Regan.

P. S.—These are the members of the club: Edward Regan, President; Jerry Sullivan, Vice-President; Albert Grimm, Secretary; Thomas Moore, Treasurer; Adolph Grimm, James Croker, John O'Neil, Matthew Langan and Philip Lohr.

We hope that your club will succeed, Edward, and we wish it every success. You may hear of Fred as a soldier or sailor some day. If your father says the books are all right, you need not be afraid to read them.

New York City.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—Inclosed please find coupon and three two-cent stamps, for which please send me one of your Dewey medals. I am a constant reader of "Work and Win" and like it very much. I wish you would publish it twice a week so I wouldn't be so anxious, as a week is too long to wait for the next one. Yours respectfully, Lewis E. Norris, 221 Van Brunt st.

We think once a week often enough, Lewis, but we are glad that you like "Work and Win" well enough to want it oftener. We hope that you were well pleased with the medal.

Chicago, Ill., August 13, 1899.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—I have been a constant reader of "Work and Win," having read from No. 1 up to the present date, and think it can't be beat. I like Fred Fearnot's stories very much. I think Fred and Terry are almost a match. I am now but twelve years old, but I think I am old enough to read Fred Fearnot's adventures. I inclose three two-cent stamps for a Dewey medal. Yours truly, Richard Farrell, 5228 Union ave.

You seem to be certainly old enough to appreciate a good thing, Richard, and we trust that you may continue to read "Work and Win" many years. The medal was sent and we hope you were pleased with it.

San Francisco, Cal., August 12, 1899.
Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—I have read from No. 1 to No. 35 of "Work and Win," and I think it is the best novel out. I saw in No. 19 that you ask the readers what they thought of "Work and Win," of Fred Fearnot and of Terry and Evelyn Olcott. I think "Work and Win" is a very nice novel, and it is a very nice name. I think Fred is a nice sort of a chap, and I think Terry and Evelyn are the best sister and brother I ever heard of. Inclosed you will find six two-cent stamps and two coupons. I want to tell you how I came to read "Work and Win." I used to read other stories and a friend of mine let me read Fred Fearnot, while he would read some of mine, so I thought as "Work and Win" was the best I would read them, and now I have the whole library. Yours truly, Frank Walton, 20½ Bausch st.

Glad you think it the best, Frank, and hope you will continue to read them. We trust that you and your friend liked your medals.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—Inclosed find three two-cent stamps, for which please send me a Dewey medal. "Work and Win" is all right. I think Fred and Terry are two nice boys. I like them very much. Evelyn is a nice girl. I appreciate "Work and Win" very much. It is all right. Yours truly, Ward Gaul, 943 Greene ave.

Short, but to the point, Ward. It is "all right," to use your own expression. We hope that you found the medal all right, also.

Springfield, Ohio, August 11, 1899.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—Inclosed you will find six cents in two-cent stamps, for which please send me one of your Dewey medals. There are six or seven of us boys and we intend to organize a club, and if the medal comes up to our expectations we are going to adopt it as a club badge. I have read nearly every kind of book and novel, but I think "Work and Win" beats them all. Wishing "Work and Win" and yourself much success, I remain, Wm. Giesselmann, 111 Gillett ave.

It does "beat them all," William, and we trust that you think the same of the medal and that your club has started. We return kind wishes.

Lewiston, Me., August 11, 1899.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—I have read quite a number of Fred Fearnot stories and I think they are the best I have ever read. I am only twelve years old, but I like to read Fred's stories very much. I would like to secure a badge. Charlie Heldman, Highland Spring road.

Short, but very good, Charlie. After all, when you say "it is the best," there is little else to say. We hope that you were well pleased with your medal.

Gloversville, N. Y., August 13, 1899.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—As I have not seen the name of a Gloversville admirer in your applause column, I thought I would let you know what I think of "Work and Win." I have read it from No. 1 to date and like it very much. I would like to see Fred and his friends take a bicycle trip across the continent. Please find inclosed twelve cents and two coupons, for which send me two Dewey medals. Yours truly, Jesse Fancher, 6 John st.

We hope that you were fully satisfied with your medal and will wear it and read "Work and Win" for many years. You may hear of such a trip being taken some day.

Dorchester, Mass., August 12, 1899.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—Inclosed find three two-cent stamps and coupon for the Dewey medal. I hope Fred will marry Evelyn, as she is the very girl for him. He is a model for every American youth. I hope he will live long, and the same to Mr. Standish. I wish success to "Work and Win" and Mr. Standish. Hoping to receive the medal soon, I remain your constant reader, John A. Quigley, 428 Seaver st.

We hope that you liked your medal, John, and that you will continue to like Fred and to follow his example. Many thanks for good wishes.

Worcester, Mass., August 12, 1899.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—I have read "Work and Win" from No. 1 to No. 36. I think there is no better book. I think Fred is the right kind of a hero, and so is Terry. I think Fred will marry Evelyn and Terry Mary Hamilton. I am glad my friend Mr. Fearnot helped Sadie get married. I did not like her. I would like you to tell all about Fred from now to his death. I don't mean to say when he gets married "he lived to an old age in a happy life," but give a book about his family and about his boys when he gets married and keep it up. I write this to you for fear it might stop soon. Please keep it a-going. I got a badge of Fred Fearnot and Admiral Dewey. I hope Fred Fearnot will be at the head all the time. Evelyn is a noble girl and I think Fred Fearnot is very worthy of her. I think the professor's daughter is jealous. Fearnot is a girl killer. Terry is his true friend. I think you can only find one among a thousand like Fearnot. I think the author of "Work and Win" is a well educated man. I think "Work and Win" should be kept up very long, at least for five or six years, because it is a very interesting book. I should be glad if it would come twice a week. I hope Fred Fearnot will not marry yet. I like to read his adventures. I have the whole set of "Work and Win" from No. 1 to the latest out. I don't let anybody take them for fear they might tear them. I have them all brand new. We have a club and nearly every one reads "Work and Win." Our name is Young Hebrew Debating Assembly. I can congratulate Fred Fearnot for talking, like animals. I think Fred Fearnot had a nice time at Avon at the banquet, and jealousy arose between Evelyn and the professor's daughter. I thank Mr. Standish for writing such fine stories. I also wish Mr. Frank Tousey a happy life. Yours truly, J. J. Price, 9 Pond st.

"There is no better book" is the highest praise. We will consider your suggestions. Thanks for best wishes.

New York City, August 14, 1899.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—Reading over the letters of Fred Fearnot's friends, I felt ashamed to think of having neglected to express my opinion of "Work and Win" before the present time. It was by chance that I started to read "Work and Win," and, as for giving it up, ah! no, it would be like losing a friend such as Terry is to Fred. Who could but help hold up Fred Fearnot as an example of American boyhood? As for Terry, he's all right, so is Evelyn and Mary, but Eunice, I think, is far too selfish and shows her jealousy too much, which is very foolish and unbecoming. Writing cannot express the regard which I feel for all hands connected with "Work and Win," so will close, wishing long life to all. I remain very respectfully, Edna Automobile, 116 East 32d st.

P. S.—You will find coupon and stamps for Dewey medal; also my best wishes for P. Adolphus Sweetcake.

We are pleased to hear from you, Edna, even if you have delayed writing. Your opinion of Fred is shared by all our readers. We hope that you liked your medal.

Baltimore, Md., August 12, 1899.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—I have been a constant reader of your "Work and Win" series. I have read every number published and hope to read them to a finish. I can safely recommend them as being as good a library for young people to read as there has ever been published. I love to read of "Fred Fearnot, Terry and Evelyn." I think Fred's name suits him exactly. I inclose three stamps to pay for a Dewey medal and hope it will suit me. I remain your constant reader, Edward King.

"As good as has ever been published" is sincere praise, Edward, and we are greatly pleased to receive it. We trust that you were well pleased with the medal.

Bath, Me., August 14, 1899.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—Inclosed find coupon and stamps for Dewey and Fearnot medal. I have read "Work and Win" from No. 1 to No. 36 and think it is the best weekly published. Fred Fearnot is a good example for all young Americans to follow. I shall always read "Work and Win" while I can get it. Wishing Mr. Standish long life and success, I remain sincerely yours, Miss Lizzie K. Webster.

"The best weekly published" seems to be the universal verdict. We trust you will follow Fred's example. The medal has been sent and we trust that you are pleased with it.

Dorchester, Mass., August 14, 1899.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—I have lately begun reading "Work and Win" library. Too much cannot be said in praise of it. I cannot put down on paper my sentiments regarding it. I read in the last number your correspondence pages, and to write down my ideas concerning the paper would be wasting your time, as I would say over again what others have said, "Work and Win" library is the best one going. Fred Fearnot is a "corker" and well deserves his name. Terry is a fast friend and a fine sort of fellow. The two girls are just the right sort of companions for a fellow like Fred. Will you please send me the Dewey badge? Yours truly, Clarence Greeley, 20 Westcott st.

P. S.—My well wishes to you and Mr. Standish; also to all other readers of "Work and Win" library. Long may you live and may you be prosperous and happy.

"Too much cannot be said in praise of it." Thanks for your good opinion, Clarence. That is what we like to hear. We hope that you are pleased with the medal.

Quebec, Canada, August 14, 1899.

Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—I have read all the numbers of "Work and Win" library from No. 1 to the last. Allow me to express my thoughts about your famous library. I think it the best five-cent library published. It is well worth the poor little nickel. I find there is no blood and thunder in it to make a person crazy. I think Fred is a noble American sport and I think the same about Terry. I think Evelyn is sweeter than Adolphus Sweetcake, although I would like very much to hit him on the head with a bwick. I would like very much to have Fred come to the Dominion of Canada. Give my respects to Hal Standish. I remain yours truly, Jos. Willie, L. T.

We run to newsdealers once a week. In sunshine and in rain.

We pay five cents to read about Fred And what Hal Standish has to say.

Your rhymes might be better, Joseph, but your sentiments are good. We are glad that you think your nickels are so well invested. "The best five-cent library published" proves that you think so. Thanks for kind words.

Elizabeth, N. J., August 14, 1899.
Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—Inclosed please find three two-cent stamps and a "Work and Win" coupon, for which please send me one Fred Fearnot medal. I have read quite a number of Fearnot's stories and I think they cannot be beat. All the boys around my neighborhood read "Work and Win." I read "Fred Fearnot in Cuba; or, Helping Uncle Sam" to a sick friend of mine, and he seemed quite pleased to hear it. He said Hal Standish was a very good author. Give my love to Fred, Terry and Evelyn. Hoping Fred gets married soon, I remain your friend, George Winans, 1020 Elizabeth ave.

They cannot be beaten, George, and you were wise to read such an interesting story to your sick friend. We are sure that he is better for it. We hope that you were pleased with the medal.

Vanceburg, Ky., August 14, 1899.
Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—Allow me to express my thoughts about your famous library, "Work and Win." I write to say that I have read "Work and Win" from No. 1 up to No. 36. The more I read the more I think about him and I have come to the conclusion that I want to see him. Please notify Judge Fearnot that I am coming to New York to congratulate him on his boy. I think Fearnot is a dandy, and Terry is his match, and as for Evelyn, she is the girl that Fred loves, and all the Kentucky girls are stuck on Fred. Please tell him to come to Kentucky. Yours till death, Earl Ruark.

They are all "stuck on" Fred, Earl, because he is the right sort of boy. You may hear of him in Kentucky some day. Thanks for kind wishes.

Roscoe, Ohio, August 14, 1899.
Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—Find inclosed coupon and required stamps, for which send me the Dewey and Fearnot medal. I have read "Work and Win" from No. 1 to No. 29 and think them great. Admiring the staying power and manliness of Fred Fearnot and companions, I am yours truly, Robert L. Davis.

We trust that you think the medal is as "great" as Fred Fearnot, Robert, and that you will wear one and read of the other for many years.

Mt. Pleasant, Pa., August 14, 1899.
Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—Inclosed find one coupon and three two-cent stamps, for which please send me one Dewey and Fearnot medal. I read "Work and Win" and find them all O K. Fred is a well accomplished youth and Terry and Evelyn are "out of sight." Would like to get the medal as soon as possible, as I am anxious to wear it. Yours truly, Ira E. Morrison.

"All O K" and "out of sight" may not be the most elegant expressions, Ira, but we understand you and appreciate the spirit which prompted them. We hope that you were pleased with the medal.

Rochester, N. Y., August 15, 1899.
Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—Inclosed find six two-cent stamps and two coupons, for which send me two Dewey medals. I think there is no better paper than "Work and Win." I wish that Fred Fearnot and Terry Olcott could come to Rochester. Send my love to P. Adolphus Sweetcake, the dude. Wishing "Work and Win" a very prosperous future. I remain yours truly, Floyd B. Spencer, 7 Alma place.

Thanks, Floyd. "No better paper" is highly complimentary. You may hear of Fred in Rochester some day. We hope that you were pleased with the medal and that you will find Skettery as amusing as Dolphie.

Port Morris, N. J., August 15, 1899.
Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—Inclosed please find three two-cent stamps and coupon, for which send me one of your Dewey and Fearnot medals. I tell you what, Fred Fearnot is great, and Terry and Evelyn are not far behind him. Yours respectfully, Willie A. Carkey, Box 25.

Short, but expressive, Willie. We hope that you are as well satisfied with the medal.

Du Bois, Pa., August 15, 1899.
Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—I am a constant reader of "Work and Win" library and consider it the best weekly published. Evelyn is the girl for Fred and Terry is O K. Inclosed find coupon and three two-cent stamps, for which please send me one Dewey medal. I will now close: wishing success to "Work and Win" and Mr. Frank Tousey, I remain, G. F. Krach, 337 West Long ave.

Here is another who thinks it the best weekly published. They come by thousands. Thanks for kind words. We hope that you were pleased with the medal.

Detroit, Mich., August 15, 1899.
Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—I find that there are a good many boys and girls in Detroit who read "Work and Win" and are interested in it. I'm one of them. I have a suggestion to make that I think all others would be pleased with. If you could make up a club and have New York the main point, I can handle Michigan and get some other ones from other States. Then we could meet at different houses each Saturday night and read "Work and Win" and other books and have a good supper and a good time. We could elect members and save up enough money to buy our books and visit other States. I am fifteen years old and think that I could get along with Michigan. If there are any readers in Michigan or any other State who approve of this address G. W. Davis, 153½ Abbot st., Detroit, Mich.

P. S.—I think "Work and Win" is the best weekly I ever read.

We will consider your suggestion. "The best weekly I ever read" is a rare recommendation. We are glad to hear it from Detroit.

Brooklyn, N. Y., August 16, 1899.
Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—Find inclosed three two-cent stamps and a coupon, for which you will please send me a medal. I have received the medal for which I sent on August 12. I think Fred and Terry should go back to Yale again. Good luck to Fred Fearnot and Hal Standish. Your paper is the best out. Chas. Kipp, 721 5th ave.

Many thanks, Charles, for the compliment. We certainly try to make it the best. We return thanks for good wishes. We are glad that you liked the medal. You may see Fred and Terry at Yale again one of these days.

New Comerstown, O., Aug. 15, 1899.
Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—Not seeing any letters in your weekly from our town I decided to write. I have read every number of "Work and Win" since it appeared and expect to read them till they disappear. I think it is the warmest novel that ever come down the pike. Fred is true blue and I think he ought to marry Evelyn at some future date. Terry is all right, too, and Mary is the only one for him. Eunice is nice, but she is too stiff for me. I like jolly people. I think girls ought to read your weekly same as boys do. Both my father and mother read them, and what they read is surely fit for the daughter. Keep Fred Fearnot going. He is the real thing. Yours truly, Jack.

Your expressions are somewhat quaint, "Jack," but your heart seems to be in the right place for all that. Certainly, if your father and mother read "Work and Win" there is no harm in your doing so.

Montreal, Canada, August 14, 1899.
Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—I have read "Work and Win" from No. 1 to No. 36. I think that it is the best book published. Fred Fearnot is great, so is Terry, and as for Evelyn, she is a peach. Wishing long life to the author and to "Work and Win," I remain yours truly, J. W. Lowe.

"The best book published" is as high praise as we could wish. Thanks for best wishes.

New York, August 14, 1899.
Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—Will you please send me one of your medals, as I am reading "Work and Win." I think it is very good. I have read many others, and "Work and Win" leads them all. I think Evelyn is a good girl for Fred. Wishing you and all a happy and bright future, I remain yours truly, T. Hughes, 131 West 60th st.

"Leads them all" is a rare compliment and we return thanks for it as well as for good wishes. We trust that you enjoy wearing the medal.

Papillion, Neb., August 15, 1899.
Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—I am a steady reader of "Work and Win" and think it comes nearer the mark than any other weekly. Fred Fearnot is just the boy and Terry is right with him. As for Evelyn, I will leave Fred to describe her. Please find inclosed a coupon and three two-cent stamps for the Dewey medal. Yours truly, Roy D. Catherwood, P. O. Box 157.

We try to reach the mark, Roy, and thank you for the compliment. We hope that you liked your medal and will wear it always.

Watervliet, N. Y., August 15, 1899.
Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—Please send me a Dewey medal. I think a great deal of Fred Fearnot. I saw a medal on John O'Melia, our newsdealer here, who speaks many a good word for your papers. I would like to know who the real hero of "Work and Win" is, if there is such. I also inclose a coupon for the art editor. I inclose three two-cent stamps with Dewey coupon. Yours for luck, John J. Conway.

We are glad you think so well of Fred Fearnot, John. He is a real character, but we cannot reveal his true name at present. We hope that you have received the medal and that you are pleased with it.

New York, August 15, 1899.
Mr. Frank Tousey—

Dear Sir:—I am one of the many readers of "Work and Win" and I find it a beautiful and successful story, by which I mean that the closer you get to the end the better you find it, but, alas! when you go too near it will all of a sudden give a snap and the story is all over. I am very near the thirty-sixth book and I would like to ask of you a favor, which is: Have you any other book something like the "Work and Win" story? If so please let me know. I have found on the last page of the story a coupon which entitles the reader to a Dewey medal, with three two-cent stamps, for which I think the medal is very cheap at such a price, but I can't tell until I receive one. I have a great many friends who are anxious to see the medal, and they say if it is satisfactory they will also write for one, and I am afraid they'll keep you too busy to do any other work but pack and ship. Yours most respectfully, John M. A. Ehret, 556 Courtlandt ave., between 149th and 150th sts.

P. S.—Inclosed please find three two-cent stamps and one coupon for the medal.

Read our other publications, John. They are all interesting and just what boys like. We trust that you and your friends will all want medals, as they are exceedingly handsome.

TWO GREAT AMERICAN HEROES.

ADMIRAL GEORGE DEWEY

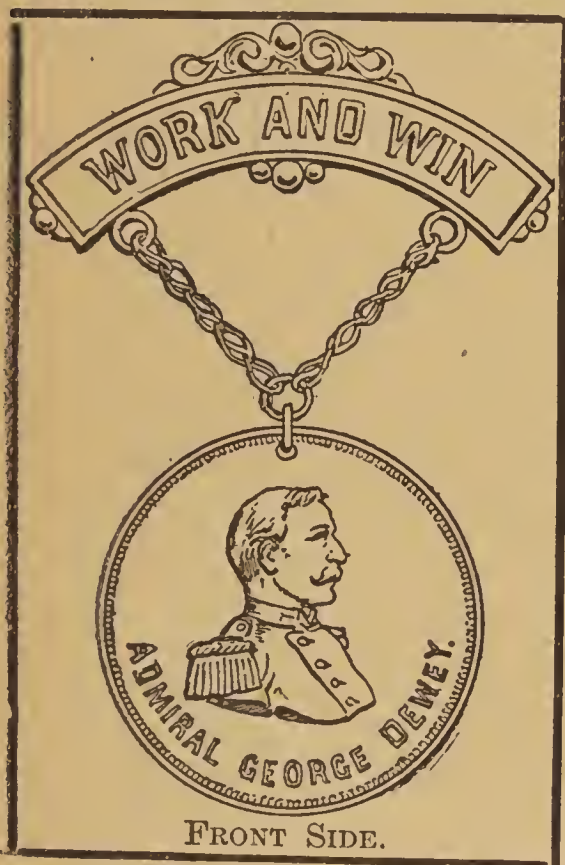
... AND ...

FRED FEARNOT.

Dewey is Coming! Fearnot is Here!

Wear Their Medal! Show What You Think of Them!

READ THIS UNPRECEDENTED OFFER.



FRONT SIDE.

We have had made for us at great expense 50,000 beautiful medals, finished in heavy gilt, closely resembling gold, bearing a life-like portrait of ADMIRAL DEWEY on one side and of FRED FEARNOT on the reverse side.

The medal is connected by chains with an oval-shaped bar on which is engraved the motto

WORK AND WIN,

which is certainly a good one for all readers to follow.

The medal is about the size of a silver half dollar, and is as neat and rich in appearance as any costing ten times its price.

The manufacturers say it will wear and hold its original color for a long period of time.



REVERSE SIDE.

As Admiral Dewey is now on his homeward journey and will soon be with us, we think every one should show their appreciation of his gallant work in some manner, and we know of no better way than by wearing a medal containing his portrait, where everybody can see what your opinion is of

THE HERO OF MANILA BAY.

HERE IS OUR GRAND OFFER:

In order that every reader of "Work and Win" may secure one or more of these medals, we have put the price away below cost as you will see when you receive it. You will find on this page a coupon. Cut it out and send it to us with THREE TWO-CENT POSTAGE STAMPS, and we will send the medal to any address, postage paid, by return mail.

WORK AND WIN COUPON.

THIS COUPON WITH THREE TWO-CENT POSTAGE STAMPS IS GOOD FOR ONE

.. Dewey Medal ..

REMEMBER! You can secure as many medals as you want, but must send ONE COUPON AND 3 TWO-CENT POSTAGE STAMPS FOR EACH MEDAL. As we have given our order for only 50,000 you had better send in at once before the supply is exhausted. Address

WORK AND WIN,
24 Union Square, New York.

WORK AND WIN.

An Interesting Weekly for Young America.

32 PAGES. COLORED COVERS.

PRICE 5 CENTS. ISSUED EVERY FRIDAY.

Every number will contain a well written story, detailing the interesting, startling and humorous adventures of FRED FEARNOT, a bright, honest, independent sort of chap, who has made up his mind to make his own way through life, and in doing so see everything to be seen, do all the good that can be done, and have all the fun possible. Nothing will be allowed in these stories that can give offense to the most refined minds, and we feel assured that the old as well as young will find both pleasure and profit in following the harmless adventures of this bright young man who always tries to do right, at the same time using every effort to keep on top.

READ ONE AND YOU WILL READ THEM ALL.

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